

## Reflections on the *Song of Moses* (Exodus 15:1—18)

About the text:

The Song of Moses comes immediately after the great deliverance from centuries of hardship in Egypt. Having seen the power of God to intervene in history, Israel finally “feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses” (14:31). The Song of Moses is a tribute to Yahweh and an opportunity for the people to join together with one voice in thanks to him. Even as we set our sights on the end of the story of salvation, the Song of Moses is on the lips of God’s people (Rev.15:3,4).

The song reflects the *past deliverance* of Israel from the pharaoh (1—13), then sets its sights on the *future victory* and *reign* of God in the promised land (14—19). In this sense, God’s people are being called to live by faith between two certainties: what God *has done* in the past and what God declares he *will do* in the future.

About God:

“*The Lord is a warrior*” (3 cf. Isaiah 47:4, “Lord of Hosts [armies]”). God’s victory over Pharaoh (1—10 cf. 14:14), nature (8), other gods (11 cf. 12:12), and Israel’s future enemies (14—16a). Enemies past are vanquished by his “right hand” (6,12); future enemies live in fear of his “arm” (16, cf. Josh. 2:10; 5:1; 9:9).

“*Who is like Yahweh?*” (11 cf. Micah 7:18). His lovingkindness (12) is the basis for his action, his leadership. Majestic in holiness, or total uniqueness in a moral sense (11). When Moses asks God to reveal himself, graciousness and kindness are central (Ex. 34:6,7).

*Redeemer* (13,16). Nothing is more central to the meaning of Exodus than redemption. The exodus from Egypt and the “eternal memorial” of Passover are remembered in ritual and throughout the scripture as they find their fulfillment in Christ. Note that God, not Israel, secures release from captivity. Israel is only witness to and beneficiary of God’s redemption. This is a picture of grace. We have become God’s possession, purchased (16) by him. Israel is no longer Pharaoh’s slave, but God’s son (4:22).

“*The Lord shall reign forever and ever*” (18). Yahweh is Israel’s King and Israel is his inheritance (17 cf. Eph. 1:18). The mountain of Yahweh’s inheritance may be a prophetic allusion to Zion or in a more generic sense of the imagery of the day, an expression of God’s presence with his people, often associated with mountains. Israel is the “sanctuary of the Lord” (17), meaning that God will dwell among his people.

It's a picture of God's people thriving under their redeemer's rule and his supernatural presence with them.

Personal Response:

*True spirituality requires memory.* "Remember" is used 200 times in the OT. To remember is to see things for what they are, leading to victorious acts of faith in God. Conversely, to forget is to become foolish and lapse into sin and unbelief. Memory also produces gratitude, which in turn orients believers to reality (note the contrast in Romans 1:21,28). This lesson is at the heart of the teaching of wisdom in the Old Testament. See, for instance, Psalm 78.

*"My strength and salvation"* (2). Are God's power and mercy sufficient? See also Romans 8:14—17, 31—39. Where are we turning for strength? How would we know if we were operating out of self-righteousness rather than grace?

There is an *emotional dimension* that can't be overlooked. The Song of Moses is a song—to be sung together in a corporate act of gratitude and praise. Good news is to be met with an outpouring of praise (Isaiah 54:1; Psalm 98:1—3). What directs our life and passions? C.S. Lewis has a helpful discussion in *Reflection On The Psalms*.

## Inductive Study Worksheet: Prophets

### Overview

Summarize the historical setting including biographical information about the prophet.

Outline book by oracle/narrative, identifying significant and recurring themes and structure.

### Oracle Study

structure (skeleton) <i>Context</i>	content (muscle) <i>Historical/Cultural</i>	application (skin) <i>Identify:</i>
What are the preceding & subsequent oracles?	Explain ancient practices, people, objects, etc. that may bear on the text's meaning	What was the prophet calling God's people to?
Historical setting, introduction, explanatory statement or narrative context	<i>Language</i>	repent hope

<i>Identify</i>	Define key and repeated theological terms	call to action
<u>who</u> —characters		How does the oracle continue to instruct God's people?
<u>where</u> —location	How does the use of figurative language or imagery relate to the meaning of the oracle? Are they interpreted in the text or elsewhere?	
<u>when</u> —time		
What <i>kind</i> of oracle?		

*Theological*

denunciation	<i>Salvation:</i> What does the oracle teach about God's program on earth?
judgment	
blessing	
promise	<i>God:</i> What does the oracle teach about God's nature?

*Outline the Oracle*

What is the main point?	<i>Humanity:</i> What does the oracle teach about human nature and the human situation?
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How is the main point supported, illustrated, explained, or applied?

*Unity*

What kind of *prophetic fulfillment* is being used?

prediction/fulfillment

motif or type fulfillment

How is the oracle part of the Bible's inter-textual commentary?

informing theology

use in subsequent revelation/NT

**Understanding The Prophets**

*Introduction to the prophets*

### *What is a prophet?*

- Prophets were active throughout the Old Testament
  - Purposes of the prophet
  - Writing prophets and the divided monarchy—resettlement periods
- Prophets speak for God
  - The word of the Lord came to me saying (Ezek. 28:1)
  - Dreams and interpretations (Daniel 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10)
  - Visions and interpretation (Amos 8:1—3; Zech. 5:1—11)
- Prophecy: the Bible's self-authentication (Is. 41:22,23,26, 42:9, 43:9,10, 44:7,8, 45:21, 46:10,11, 48:5)

### *Prophets as preachers* (see Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, v.1, “What Manner of Man is the Prophet?”)

- Sensitivity to evil (Is. 32:11; Hos. 6:4)
  - Society accommodates evil, becoming callous to it
  - Prophets sensitize people to their true spiritual state
- Confront violations of covenant—preachers of social reform
  - Superficial & apostate religion (Hos. 6:6; Is. 29:13; Jer. 2:8; 7:9,10)
  - Materialism, power and the wisdom of the world (Jer. 9:23, 24)
  - Social injustice (Is. 10:2)
- Burdened by their calling
  - Rejected as a sign of the peoples’ response to God (Jer. 26:7—15)
  - Martyred (Heb. 11:37)
  - Despairing (Jer. 20:14—18)
- Not selective
  - Important role guiding kings (2 Kings 19)
  - No one escaped prophetic denunciation
- Lived in the horror and joy of their visions
- Represented the humiliation of the people (Micah 2:8; cf. Is. 20)

### Example: Hosea’s fateful marriage—the life of a prophet

- Reason for the marriage (1:2)
- Names of the children (1:3—9)
- Unfaithful and unknowing Gomer (2:1—13)
- Hosea pursues and redeems his wife (2:14—3:5)
- The children are redeemed (1:10, 11; 2:1, 23)

## **Overview: The Prophets**

*Summarize the historical setting including biographical information about the prophet.*

The prophets spoke both to their own historical situation and beyond it to the future. The turbulent and uncertain times of the divided monarchy, Babylonian captivity and resettlement provide a backdrop of existential and theological challenges to the people of God. Where is God? Why are these things happening to a covenant people? Is God faithful to his promises? What will the future look like? Within this context, prophets speak forth the word of God, challenging and comforting the people. And remarkably, within the biblical context of antecedent theology, the prophets look to the future of God's program on earth.

The first step in inductive study is to orient the prophet's book in its historical environment. As you read, note any reference to the prophet's place and family or origin. What strata of society does the prophet come from? What tribe?

Prophets also provide critical information about when they received their messages from God in relation to the ruling kings of Israel and Judah. For instance, Amos 1:1

The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Based on this information, we can look to the narrative in Kings and Chronicles to get a picture of what was happening during this time (for Amos see 2 Kings 13,14; 2 Chron. 22,26). A short summary of the spiritual, moral, and political climate will help understand the context for the prophetic messages within the book.

See John Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. (attached)

***Outline the book by oracle/narrative, identifying significant and recurring themes and structure.***

*What is an oracle?*

- The main structural element of book. Oracles are messages from God.

*Prophetic books are carefully organized collections of a prophet's oracles*

- Chronology or theme are main criteria for arrangement
- Oracles introduced by:

- change in narrative context or subject: people (who), place (where), time (when)
- Introduction formula
  - “Thus says the Lord...”, or “Then the Lord said to me...”, or “The word of the Lord came to me...”; “Hear the word of the Lord...” or “the Lord showed me...”
  - “Hear”, “Woe”...

*Illustration of structure: Amos*

- Amos 1, 2:
  - 8 times the expression “for three transgressions and four, I will...”
- Amos 3—5
  - Imperative to “hear” occurs as an introduction to the sets of oracles (3:1; 4:1; 5:1)
  - Repetition also relates to the structure of the individual oracle:
    - “Yet you have not returned to Me” 5 times in ch. 4, ending with “prepare to meet your God”
    - “Seek...that you may live” in Amos 5
- Amos 6
  - “Woe” introduces the prophecy of ch. 6
- Amos 7—9
  - A series of five visions with response introduced by “Thus the Lord God showed me...” (7:1, 4, 7; 8:1; 9:1)

**Four Types of Oracles**

<i>Type of Oracle</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Example</i>
<i>Denunciation</i>	Israel is in unique relationship with God as a covenant people (Ex. 19:3—7). Terms of the bilateral covenant place obligations on Israel (“if...then...”). Obedience to the <i>Law</i> is the basis on which Israel fulfills its obligation and the terms under which God’s blessing is secured (Lev. 26:3ff). However, failure to keep the covenant results in a “guilty” verdict (Lev. 26:14—16a). Nations opposing God’s covenant people and who act treacherously against them are also confronted by God.	Hosea 1:1—9; Amos 1:3a, 6, 9, 11, 13, 2:1, 4, 6—8; Micah 1:2—5; 2:1,2; Zephaniah 3:1—6  <b>Terms such as “woe”, “lament”, “taunt” commonly used. Note Micah’s use of legal terminology in his denunciations of Judah in 1:2; 6:1 (see also Hosea 4:1)</b>

<i>Judgment</i>	As Israel <i>violates covenant</i> , God withdraws his protection from them, allowing empires and nations to rise up against them. Lev. 26:16b—39 stipulates the penalties: deportation, destruction, disease, death, disgrace. Judgment oracles are <i>conditional</i> , depending on individual or national repentance (see Jer. 18:5—12).	See Amos verses above; Zephaniah 1:2—18; Micah 5:10—15; 6:13—16  <b>Judgment oracles often come after a word of denunciation, and may be introduced with connectives such as “therefore” or “so” (Jer. 25:8ff; Amos 1)</b>
<i>Blessing</i>	God will remain <i>faithful to his covenants</i> . After a time of judgment, God will restore Israel to the land and continue the progress of salvation history (Lev. 26:40—46). The prophets envisioned a time of <i>restoration</i> of God’s people in the land and under his blessing.	Amos 9:11—15; Jer. 16:14, 15; 24:1—7  Blessing oracles frequently come after judgment oracles, and sometimes after a call to <i>repent</i> (Joel 2:12—17 and 18—27)
<i>Promise</i>	The plan of salvation is <i>universal</i> , even cosmic, and <i>eternal</i> . At the end of salvation history, God will rule personally through his <i>Davidic king</i> from Jerusalem. This will be a time of salvation, peace and abundance for those who yield to God, and of judgment for those who resist his rule.	Joel 2:28—32; Jer. 31:31—37; 23:3—8; Isaiah 9:6, 7  <b>Promise oracles are often combined with words of blessing. Look for breaks in the text introduces by “then”, “and then”, “after this”... (Joel 2:28)</b>

**Example: Micah 6:1—5**

6:1 *Announcement*: “Hear now what the Lord is saying”

- Plead your case before the mountains

6:2 *Charge*: “Listen to the indictment of the Lord”

- **The Lord has a case/dispute against his people**

6:3—5 *God speaks*:

- What have I done to make you weary?
  - Exhibit A: I ransomed you from Egypt, house of slavery

- Exhibit B: I led you through Moses and Aaron
- Exhibit C: I provided guidance for you in Balak and Balaam
- So that you might know the righteous acts of the Lord

*Assignment:* Read Micah outlining it by oracle and identifying each oracle by type.