

away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?^t ¹²Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” ¹³But Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again.” ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.”^v

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. ¹⁶But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground.” ¹⁷Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.^x ¹⁸And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.”^y

¹⁹ The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them.^z ²⁰It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.^a ²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.^b ²³The Egyptians pursued, and went

14.11 ^tPs 106.7, 8
 14.13 ^uGen 15.1;
 ver 30; Ex 15.2
 14.14 ^vEx 15.3;
 Deut 1.30; 3.22;
 Isa 30.15
 14.16 ^wEx 4.17;
 Num 20.8, 9, 11;
 Isa 10.26
 14.17 ^xver 4
 14.18 ^yver 25
 14.19 ^zEx 13.21, 22
 14.21 ^aver 16;
 Ps 106.9; 114.3, 5;
 Isa 63.12, 13
 14.22 ^bEx 15.19;
 Neh 9.11;
 Heb 11.29

14.24 ^cEx 13.21
 14.25 ^dver 4, 18
 14.27 ^eEx 15.1, 7
 14.28 ^fPs 78.53;
 106.11
 14.29 ^gEx 15.19;
 Neh 9.11;
 Heb 11.29
 14.30 ^hPs 106.8
 14.31 ⁱPs 106.12;
 15.1 ^jPs 106.12;
 Rev 15.3

into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic.^c ²⁵He clogged^d their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.”^d

The Pursuers Drowned

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.” ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea.^e ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained.^f ²⁹But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.^g

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.^h ³¹Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.ⁱ

The Song of Moses

15 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.^j

^a14.25 Sam Gk Syr: MT removed

14.20 *cloud ... darkness.* The motif of the warrior deity who aids his people at crucial moments in battle against their enemies occurs frequently in ancient Near Eastern literature. Here, Yahweh sends a cloud so dense that it functions as an impenetrable—by sight or movement—barrier between the Egyptians and the Israelites. Records of the military exploits of the Hittite king Mursili report a similar phenomenon:

- Storm god came to his aid
- Rained all night
- Enemy could not see camp
- Storm god sent cloud
- Cloud went before troops
- Thus provided deliverance and guidance

It was not uncommon in military reports to speak of advantageous circumstances in terms of divine intervention and aid. If one group found itself on the successful end of a skirmish, it credited its own god or

gods and often spoke of the deity as if he had arranged all aspects of the natural order in order to ensure a triumphant outcome.

15.1 *the Israelites sang.* The text does not reveal who composed the song, but the distinct possibility exists that it was authored by one or more of the women. Ancient Israelite culture seems to have developed a significant musical tradition. Rhythm (as opposed to melody) was probably the music’s dominant feature, and women may have had a crucial role in creating and performing this type of music. Women are the only ones explicitly mentioned in Biblical texts as using the “timbrel” (cf. v. 20). Moreover, clay figurines from Iron Age Israel that depict musicians show all percussionists to be women.

It also stands to reason that victory songs, like the one here, would come from women, since they are the ones who most likely sang songs as the men returned home from battle.