



Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat January 19, 2008 / Shevat 12, 5768

Parashah #16

Torah: *B'shalakh* (After he had let go), *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 13.17-17.16

Haftorah: *Shof'tim* (Judges) 4.4-5.31

Suggested Messianic Writings: Revelation 19.1-20.6

Shalom,

As we open the Parashah, the first two verses almost seem to be oxymoronic. Elohim did not let the people of Israel leave Egypt and go directly to the Promised Land, for the route passed through the land of the *P'lishtim* (Philistines), and Elohim felt that if the people saw war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt. Next it says that Israel left Egypt fully armed. I would have to be in agreement with the commentators that even if well armed, Israel did not yet have a trust in Elohim to protect them in any and every circumstance. Plus the fact that these were slaves who had had no apparent military training. Edersheim notes that the Philistines were such a war-like race that even Egypt could scarcely stand against them. He also believed that, "To such test G-d in His mercy would not expose a people so unprepared for it, as was Israel at that time."¹ The Hebrew text actually seems to suggest only that Israel marched out in orderly columns.² *Sh'mot* 12:51 from the previous Parashah would imply the same. No doubt some arms were gained by plundering the Egyptians, for a little later we read of the battle with the Amalekites.

In *Sh'mot* 14:2, we are told that Israel camped in front of *Ba'al-Tz'fon*. The ArtScroll commentary tells us that this was an idol of Egypt that had not yet been destroyed. The term means such things as, "Master/Lord of winter, of the dark, of the gloomy and unknown; the destroyer." This may be a reason why Pharaoh gave chase, thinking that this idol had trapped Israel. He may also have thought that this god was the one who split the sea, and that is why he dared to enter between the waters to continue pursuit.

Sh'mot 14:5 seems to imply that for the first time Pharaoh had a realization that Israel was taking much more than a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices – they had fled Egypt. Thus, even after the deaths of all the first-born in Egypt, Pharaoh had another heart-hardening episode. Israel had reached the above-named location that seemingly held no escape, a plan purposefully devised by HaShem, and as they saw Pharaoh and his army pursuing, Israel cried out in fear. Moshe's answer are words that ring through the ages as a strength to our own faith today, "Stop being so fearful! Remain steady, and you will see how ADONAI is going to save you... ADONAI will do battle for you. Just calm yourselves down!" Learning from this experience of history, King David would later write, "Some may trust in chariots, some may trust in horses, but we will trust in the Name of our G-d" (*Tehillim* (Psalms) 20:8(7)).

The sea was split, the land became dry, and Israel traveled across, turned around and witnessed the destruction of the Egyptian army behind them. A question was brought up in our Torah study last week as to whether Pharaoh himself was destroyed. The terms used in our Parashah refer to Pharaoh's chariots and his army, but no exact mention of the death of Pharaoh is made, it is implied only. The only specific reference to this matter is found in *Tehillim* 136.15, where the Psalmist wrote that ADONAI "swept Pharaoh and his army into the sea" [emphasis added].

Sh'mot 15 is commonly called *The Song of Moses*. The word translated "sang" in Hebrew is, יָשַׁר *ya-sheer*, which literally means "will sing" – "Then Moshe and the people of Israel will sing this song to ADONAI." Rashi and other commentators take this to mean that the song will be sung during Messianic times. The Song of Moshe is mentioned again in Revelation 15:3, to be sung at the culmination of history. *Tehillim* 90 is attributed to Moshe, and at least one writer I read believes that, along with this chapter, *Tehillim* 90-100 could very well be the Song of Moses. If you read those Psalms as one unit, that could be a possibility, even with the mention of *Shmuel* (Samuel) in *Tehillim* 99. After all, Moshe prophesied about the coming Temple in *Sh'mot* 15:17.

"*Yah* is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." This verse, the first section of 15:2, is the only verse found in all three sections of the Tanakh – here in Torah; in the *Nevi'im* (Prophets) in *Yeshaya'yahu* (Isaiah) 12:2; and in the *K'tuvim* (Writings) in *Tehillim* 118:14. *My salvation* in the Hebrew is לְיִשׁוּעָה *lee-y'shu-ah*. *Yeshaya'yahu* writes of the future restoration of Israel, and on the day when Israel proclaims, "*Yah* has become my *Yeshua*," then they will joyfully draw water from the springs of salvation (*y'shua*). Sounds like a *Yochanan* (John) 7 experience to me. The Psalmist wrote of the Messiah, for he

spoke of this one who became לִישׁוּעָה *lee-y'shu-ah*, then wrote that the very rock [see 1 Corinthians 10:4] that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, following that up with, “אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא, *Ah-nah ADONAI ho-shee-ah nah*; Please, ADONAI! Save us!” The English translation Hosanna may sound like a word of praise, but it literally in Hebrew means *save us*.

Sh'mot 15:26 is a passage that we should well heed in our day, for I believe the words apply on a corporate level first of all, “If you will listen intently to the voice of ADONAI your G-d, do what He considers right, pay attention to His *mitzvot* [commandments] and observe His laws, I will not afflict you with any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians; because I am ADONAI your healer יְיָ רֹפֵאֲךָ [ADONAI *ropheka* (*rophe*)].” Perhaps the choice to be “free from the Law” was not such a good idea? Naturally we live in a fallen world with much sickness and sorrow, but if believers on a corporate level were really living a Torah observant life-style, do you think it possible that there could be less sickness and sorrow among us? The words of ADONAI are laws and rules of life (vs 25).

I suggest we all place an altar before our [spiritual] eyes which reads, “יְיָ נֹסִי, ADONAI *nee-see*, ADONAI is my banner/miracle (Sh'mot 17:15),” and live by that standard. There is an old song that says, “Prayer is the key to Heaven, but faith unlocks the door.” Stepping out in complete faith is not easy, for as Rashi said, “All beginnings are difficult.” But after all, it was ADONAI who brought us out of Egypt.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah

(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi (Marc)

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

(Acts 1:11 CJB)

¹ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, Hendrickson Publishers

² Per John Sailhammer in *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, Zondervan Publishers