



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

**Sermon for Lent 2 Midweek**  
March 8, 2023

# Our Ordinary Lenten Exodus: The Gloria

## Exodus 14:30-15:21; Luke 2:8-14

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We praise people when they do something well, when they achieve one of their goals, or for a certain accomplishment. We want others to know what they've done. We're proud of them. When a child wins an award at school. When a friend is promoted at work. When you've been working hard on something and finally get it done. It feels good to be praised, to have others recognize our accomplishments. If the accomplishment is big enough or of particular note, then memorials are built, songs are written about it, days set aside to remember the event, so that the praise won't be just for a day or two, but be passed down the generations.

So, it was for Israel's exodus out of Egypt. They had been slaves for so long - it was all they knew or could remember. They were slaves, their fathers were slaves, their grandfathers were slaves. The burden of their slavery was getting heavier with each passing generation, and there was no end in sight. Then they cried out to the Lord, as we considered last week, and He rescued them. But not only *that* He did it, but *how* He did it, they needed to remember and praise Him for that. So that when they confessed that they were the people God brought out of Egypt, they would remember all of it - *all* the mighty deeds God had done for them.

First there were the ten plagues God sent upon the land of Egypt. The water turned to blood, the invasion of the frogs, the clouds of gnats, the swarms of flies, the death of the Egyptian livestock, the boils on man and beast, the destructive hail, the devouring locusts, the three days of pitch darkness, and then the death of the firstborn of all the Egyptians. But not only *that* God sent those plagues on the land of Egypt, but that many of them effected *only* the Egyptians and not the people of Israel living in Egypt.

But there's more. When Pharaoh finally releases them from their bondage, the people of Israel did not leave empty handed, but were enriched as the Egyptians gave them silver and gold and clothing as they left. They also did not leave alone, as God Himself led them out in a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. As if all that weren't enough, if that wasn't amazing enough or accomplishment enough, there was God's deliverance of Israel and the destruction of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Pharaoh and the best of his army were chasing after Israel to haul them back to Egypt. Everything they gained was about to be lost. The Red Sea was before them, and the Egyptian army was behind them. But - and you know the story - God divided the sea so that Israel could walk



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

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March 8, 2023

through it on dry ground. And when Pharaoh and his army went in and pursued Israel, the sea returned to its place and swallowed them up.

So Israel sang about it. *A hymn of praise.* For music helps the word get into our minds and hearts. They praised God and wanted future generations to remember and do the same. To never forget what God had done for them. So they learned and sang the hymn of praise.

But as I said last week, out of Egypt was just step one in God's plan. As great as all that was, there was a greater exodus that God had in mind, a greater exodus that God was working toward, from a greater slavery to a greater freedom. The exodus from Egypt was put in motion when God sent Moses to Egypt. This greater exodus, from our slavery to sin, death, and hell, was put in motion when God sent His Son into the world. And when He did, it was the angels who sang a hymn of praise. The angels who could not remain silent, who could not restrain their joy, but broke forth in praise of God, saying, "***Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.***" Or, in a slightly different but more well-known translation: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward man.*<sup>i</sup> The angels proclaimed that to the Bethlehem shepherds, that they would know. But those words and that praise has continued down through the ages. Luke tells us that after the shepherds saw their Savior lying in the manger, they told Joseph and Mary the saying that had been told them concerning this child,<sup>ii</sup> and then when they left, they glorified and praised God for all they had heard and seen.<sup>iii</sup> Or in other words, they told others not just *of* the baby Jesus, but who He was and what He had come to do - the message of the angels.

That message now is repeated and sung by generation after generation in the liturgy of the church, a hymn of praise to our God. That we always remember what God has done for us, how God rescued us, and we praise Him for it. Even if the hymns that day fall flat and the sermon is a flop, we sing the praise of God and all that He has done in the liturgy. It is always there, that it may always be on our tongues, in our ears, and in our hearts.

When we sing that, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, we start with the words of the angels, but don't stop there. Just as Israel's song proclaimed *what* God had done and *how* He did it, so does our hymn of praise. The words of the angels proclaim Jesus' birth, but then our hymn of praise continues. **Who is this God on high?** The Father Almighty, and His only begotten Son, now incarnate in the flesh of Jesus. **And why is this Son now incarnate in the flesh of Jesus?** To be the Lamb of God *who takes away the sin of the world.* The Lamb of God who is our substitute in death. The Lamb of God who sheds His blood because of our sin. But the Lamb of God, we then go on to sing, who now *sits at the right hand of God the Father.* That is, who is no longer dead but rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, as both God and man, to His place of honor and authority. From there He is ruling all things for our good. From there, the holy one sends His Holy Spirit to us to make us holy in the forgiveness of our sins. Like Israel when they came out of Egypt, our Lord enriches us with His gifts and does not leave us alone, but continues with us, leading and guiding



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us on the way. Until He accomplishes *our* great exodus, when we, too, will rise from the dust of death and live with Him forever.

This really is good news, for like Israel, it's not always smooth sailing in this world and life. Israel got stuck between the rock and the hard place of the Red Sea and the pursuing Egyptian army. Sometimes we find ourselves in the same kind of situations, not knowing where to turn, and with (what seems as) no way out. At such times, you may not feel like praising God, like He's not doing enough to help you, like He doesn't even see or know the spot you're in! But He does. And that's where **this second ordinary** of the liturgy can really help us. For in those times of struggle and trouble, when the praise of God seems so far from us, *it comes to us* in the liturgy. Our fellow Christians sing it and proclaim it to us, and we sing it with our (perhaps) reluctant or unwilling lips. And with these words in our ears and on our tongues, we are reminded, we remember, what God has done for us. That as God rescued Israel, so He has rescued us. The sin in us and in our world cannot win. The death that is eating away at us from within and assaults us from without has already been defeated. The problems that eat at us God can and will use for our good. So, while our future may not be easy, it is safe and secure. In Jesus.

So, the *Gloria*: the second ordinary, the second part of our liturgy that is ordinarily in every service. With it we take our place in the great exodus of people who praise and proclaim the glory of God. Israel was the people God brought out of Egypt to freedom; we are the people God brings out of death to life. So, we ***sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously! Glory to God in the highest!*** We are free.

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

<sup>i</sup> KJV

<sup>ii</sup> Luke 2:17

<sup>iii</sup> Luke 2:20