

***Does the Lord Fight Our Battles?***

The starting place is the beginning of the book of Exodus, where the scene is set: fearing the emergence of the Hebrews in Egypt, Pharaoh and company, indeed, the entire citizenry of the land, imposed oppressive measures upon the Hebrews living in their midst: enslaving, torturing, stripping them of their resources, and denying them their human dignity and freedom.

Israel was unable to resist. Israel suffered mightily. So Israel cried out to Yahweh. Yahweh heard, and then enacted the divine action to save and to liberate, culminating in the Red Sea Miracle.

This poem is an attempt, as only poetry can possibly do, to express the thrill of Israel's salvation – their freedom from forces over which they had no control. But, like all political acts of war, it was incomplete. Israel would suffer defeat and oppression, even exile, yet again. Plus, Israel's response to this freedom, while thrilled at first, quickly turned to doubt, fear, complaint and idolatry. The divine plan to save, to liberate, so profoundly initiated in the Red Sea Miracle, would come to full fruition only in the divine miracle of the empty tomb.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the world's final and ultimate salvation – liberating us and all people from all those things over which humans truly have no control: namely sin, disease, suffering and death – our real enemies, defeated by God, who saves us, calling for only faith and trust.

Is our response to our salvation as full of the thrill of salvation that we see in this poem? Or shall we respond as Israel later did, with our own fears, doubts, complaining against God, and relying, instead of on God, on our own idols – such as politics, tyranny, and violence?