

April 26, 2008

**THE WORSHIPING ARMY OF GOD
EXODUS 4.21-23; 12.40-51**

The people of God as an army are called into God's presence to be inspected, given marching orders, invigorated, and sent out in order to take dominion over the world bringing it to its intended rest.

1. THE PEOPLE OF GOD AS THE ARMY OF GOD

The fact that we are an army: Note Exod 12.41, 51 and the word "armies." Cf. also 6.26; 7.4; 12.17

After the children of Israel are brought up out of Egypt and come to Sinai, it is there that they are mustered as an army. Cf. Num 1–10. (They are still at Sinai; Num 1.1.)

Num 1.3 we read that Moses and Aaron are to muster the people from 20 years old and upward by their armies.

Why does God have an army?: Adam was created him for the purpose of taking dominion over the whole earth. Adam would do this and, in the image of his dominion-taking heavenly Father, he would bring the creation to its rest.

This dominion-taking is a form of war. Without the presence of sin this war would have been of a different nature and less difficult, but it would have been war-like nevertheless.

Gen 2.15: Adam is to *guard* the Garden. There would be threats to be repelled. This is a pre-fall phenomenon.

The "untamed" creation lay outside of the Garden and Eden. Even without the presence of sin, Adam would have to work and wrestle with things in order to take dominion over them.

This is "image of God" stuff. Cf. Exod 15.3, "YHWH is a man/husband of war." If he is a warrior then we must be warriors.

Sin intensifies and adds new dimensions to the battle. The serpent must still be overcome—and he will be overcome—by the Warrior Bride and the Warrior Seed (Gen 3.15). The land must also be "fought" to make it fruitful.

This is intensification not something brand new. Thus, the people of God were always meant to be God's army.

2. THE PEOPLE OF GOD AS THE WORSHIPING ARMY

From the beginning ... again: Man is created in order to take dominion of the earth; Cf. Gen 1.26-28. But that dominion was always to be understood within the context of man as a worshiper.

Military terms: man owes his allegiance to this one Commander, and he is to show that allegiance through acts of homage.

Worship is not something that God "tacked on" to man's "essence," or something like that. Man is created as *homo adorans*, worshipping man.

Man is created and defined by God. He is told who he is and what he is to do. Man owes his allegiance to God.

This allegiance (*faith*) was something that was to be exercised in tangible ways in the Garden of Eden. Man will find life in the midst of the Garden at the Tree of Life, a tree from which he was invited to eat.

Eventually, man will be promoted in the midst of the Garden at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. After he is obedient and proves himself to be faithful in the tasks given him, God will give him greater rule in the world.

All occurs in the Garden on the mountain of God. The mountain of God was the place of worship. Thus, it was the place where man receives life from God and exaltation from God. (Cf. topography of Gen 2; Ezek 28.14-16; Sinai; Mt. Zion; Mt. 28.16-20)

So, warrior man's fundamental context for life was found in being a worshiper. This defined the fact that he was a warrior *and* how the warfare was to take place.

The purpose of the Exodus: Cf. Exod 4.23, "... that he may *serve* me." Service = worship (cp. 3.12, 18; 5.1-3).

God delivers his *armies*. Why is he delivering his armies? In order that they might worship him.

At Sinai: Calls to worship with the sound of trumpets (Ex 19.13, 16, 19).

Makes covenant with them and provides the means for continual covenant renewal in giving them prescriptions for the Tabernacle (Exod) and the Tabernacle service (Leviticus).

The Tabernacle will be a portable holy mountain. Sinai is found there (Ps 68.17). As God forms his people at Sinai, he is shaping up those armies he has delivered. He is forming up an army that will be called to take the land that was promised to Abraham. He is forming a worshipping army. At Sinai, God arranges his armies.

Exod 19 and Num 10 occur within the stay at Sinai. God arranges his armies there.

The high priest: God gives him armor; a helmet, a breastplate, a sword, etc. The high priest is a warrior. Cp. Isa 59.17; Eph 6.10ff.; Rev 1 (the vision of Jesus dressed as high priest and the rest of Revelation); Cp. also Josh 6 (priests and Jericho).

Arrangement of the people of God (Num 1–10). Num 2.3, God is arranging his *armies*.

Armies arranged around the Tabernacle, the mountain of God. The Tabernacle is central to the army of God, because worship is meant to order and prepare the army for the warfare their God intends.

Worship = battle itself. E.g., Passover: God delivers his people and destroys his enemies.

Trumpets: Exod 19; Num 10 - The priests were to sound the trumpets to gather the people and break camp.

Trumpets = memorials (10.9). I.e., he will hear them and come and defeat their enemies. God himself is called to the battle.

The people of God were arranged and fundamentally understood as a worshipping army. The call to gather at the Tabernacle had a fundamental connection with their call to war.

Three times a year God's army had to be mustered: Passover, Weeks, Booths. All males (i.e., 20 years and older).

Jesus and the Sermon on the Mountain: Jesus has passed through the water, battles the serpent (cp. Ex 17), ascends the mountain to give God's new, fulfilled law, and forms up his armies. Mt 8 will be the beginning of conquest.

What does this mean for our worship?: We are mustered at the Feast. He comes to inspect us, rearrange us, invigorate us, and send us out to take the dominion to which he has called us in order to bring the world to its intended rest.

Covenant Renewal should have a particular *tone*. It is distinct from what you do privately. It is distinct from concerts, play times, etc. The sights, sounds, and rituals that God instituted in the OC reminded his armies of what they were doing. They were specified because they had purpose and meaning.

When the Commander shows up—and he does show up—there should be *respect*. When you come before the commanding officer in an army, you stand at attention. This requires focus and focus requires discipline.

Worship should be *orderly*. God had prescribed rites and rituals that made his worship beautiful. He had certain sounds that told his people what to do at particular times.

The militaristic context of covenant renewal also implies that there should be *vigor*. Our tone should be lively and full of energy.

Music and the way we perform and sing it. Bride songs: Ex 15; Jdg 5; 1 Sam 2; Lk 1. The Psalms are the bride's song book, given to us by our husband. We are directly commanded to sing them. And we should sing them with the right tone.

Worship on the Lord's Day is *purposeful* or *telic*. What we do here looks behind this particular time to the work that needs to be done. We are being prepared to be sent out to take dominion.