

ABLE TO STAND

PART 4: THE DIVINE WARRIOR

“... Be strong in the Lord and in the [POWER]
of his MIGHT.” Ephesians 6:10 (ESV)



THE LORD IS A WARRIOR

Divine Warrior Motif in the
First Testament



What is the Divine Warrior Motif?

ANE Concept: The deity functions as a divine ruler who is to preserve the peace and prosperity of the subordinate people through acts of warfare --the covenant stipulation of a sovereign to pursue and triumph over enemies.

Within the Hebrew text: Language and design patterns that compose the divine warrior motif, including:

- “The Day of Yahweh”
- The deity and accompanying forces are emphasized over opposing forces, either earthly or heavenly.
- Warlike imagery related to the deity: chariots, weaponry (bow, arrow(s), sword, etc.), burning anger
- Theophanic accompaniments such as the rumbling or shaking of the foundations of the earth, fear and trembling of enemies, and judgment
- Direct correlation to divine rulership over a kingdom and subsequently the deity of the adversary.

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; *and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord.*” (Exodus 12:12, ESV)

God and War in the First Testament (FT)

1. The wars of faithful Israel were occasions in which Israel (Deut 20), the heavenly army (2 Kings 6:17) and creation (Josh 10:1–15; Judg 5:19–21) took part, but such warfare was clearly the divine prerogative, and it was Yahweh who led Israel into battle and brought the victory (e.g., Gen 14:19–20; 15:1; Josh 10:40; Judg 5:4–5).
2. The FT narratives consistently identify God with Israel's experience of warfare.
3. YHWH is called a “Man of war” (Ex. 15:3), Whose victorious acts freed His people from the oppression of slavery.
4. In the period of the Hebrew monarchy, God was celebrated as “the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle” (Ps. 24:8).
5. one of the most common epithets for God in the FT is the “Lord of hosts” (lit “Lord of armies”), an expression used more than two hundred times in the biblical text.

YHWH AS THE DIVINE WARRIOR

- 3 Yahweh is a man of war; Yahweh is his name.
- 4 The chariots of Pharaoh and his army he cast into the sea,
and his choice adjutants were sunk in the [Red Sea].
- 6 Yahweh, your right hand is glorious in power;
Yahweh, your right hand destroyed the enemy.
- 7 And in the greatness of your majesty you overthrew those standing up to you;
you released your fierce anger, and it consumed them like stubble.
- 9 The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide plunder,
my desire will be full of them, I will draw my sword, my hand will destroy them.’
- 10 You blew with your breath; the sea covered them;
they dropped like lead in the mighty waters.
- 11 Who is like you among the gods, Yahweh?
the earth swallowed them.
- 13 In your loyal love you led the people whom you redeemed;
in your strength you guided them to the abode of your holiness.
- 17 You brought them and planted them on the mountain of your inheritance,
a place you made for yourself to inhabit, Yahweh,
a sanctuary, Lord, that your hands established.
- 18 Yahweh will reign as king forever and ever.”

Exodus 15:3–18 (LEB)

YHWH AS THE DIVINE WARRIOR

“The association of God with warfare in ancient Israel is integral to the fundamental theology of the Hebrews, namely, that God participated in and through this historical experience. Their liberation from slavery, their possession of the Promised Land, and eventually their loss of independent nationhood were all understood in direct relationship to God, i.e. His will and purpose as expressed in the covenant, and their own obedience and disobedience with respect to the covenant stipulations (Deut. 11:26–28).”*

“See, I am setting [before you] [today] a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God that I am commanding you [today], 28 and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God, but rather you turn from the way that I am commanding you [today] to go after other gods that you have not known. (Dt 11:26–28, LEB)

A NEW EXODUS

REDEMPTION AND
FORGIVENESS



OUR GOD REIGNS

“Shake yourself free from the dust! Rise up; sit, Jerusalem!

Free yourselves from the bonds of your neck, captive daughter of Zion!

3 For thus says Yahweh:

“You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.

“My people went down to Egypt in the beginning, to dwell as aliens there, and Assyria oppressed him [without cause]. 5 And now what do I have here?” [declares] Yahweh, “for my people is taken without cause. Its rulers howl,” [declares] Yahweh —“and my name is reviled continually, all day. 6 Therefore my people shall know my name, therefore in that day, that I am the one who speaks. [Here am I].”

Is 52:2–6.

“How delightful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation,

who says to Zion, “Your God reigns as a king.”

8 The voices of your watchmen! They lift up their voices;

together they sing for joy;

for they [clearly] see Yahweh’s return to Zion.

9 Break forth,

sing for joy together, ruins of Jerusalem,

for Yahweh has comforted his people;

he has redeemed Jerusalem.”

Is 52:7–9.

“Yahweh has bared [his holy arm] to the eyes of all the nations,

and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Is 52:10.

12 For you shall not go out in haste,

and you shall not go in flight,

for Yahweh is going before you,

and your rear guard is the God of Israel.

Is 52:12.

Look, my servant shall achieve success;
he shall be exalted,
and he shall be lifted up,
and he shall be very high.

14 Just as many were appalled at you—
such was his appearance beyond human disfigurement,
and his form beyond the sons of mankind—

15 so he shall sprinkle many nations;
because of him, kings shall shut their mouths.
For they shall see what has not been told them,
and they shall consider with full attention what they have not heard.

Is 52:13–15 (LEB)

“ Who has believed our message,
and to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?

2 For he went up like a shoot before him,
and like a root from dry ground.

He had no form and no majesty that we should see him,
and no appearance that we should take pleasure in him.

3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of suffering, and acquainted with sickness,
and like [one from whom others hide their faces], he was despised,
and we did not hold him in high regard.”

Is 53.1-3 (LEB)

OUR GOD REIGNS

2 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you for a share of the inheritance of the saints in light, 13 who has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us* to the kingdom of the Son [he loves], 14 in whom we have the redemption [through His blood] , the forgiveness of sins,

2012), Col 1:12–14.

10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Php 2:10–11.

5 When he* had disarmed the rulers and the authorities, he made a display of them in public, triumphing over them by it.

Col 2:15.

9 Consequently, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are built up together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Eph 2:19–22.

1 What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, together with him, freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring charges against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. 34 Who is the one who condemns? Christ is the one who died, and more than that, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or hunger or lack of sufficient clothing or danger or the sword? 36 Just as it is written, "On account of you we are being put to death the whole day long; we are considered as sheep for slaughter." 37 No, but in all these things we prevail completely through the one who loved us.

English Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Ro 8:31–37.