

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam

DOCUMENT 253

YAHWEH IS A MAN OF WAR

A Covenant Deep Dive into Exodus 15:3 — *ish milchamah* (man of war) in the Tanakh

What Does the Hebrew Say, Is Yahweh Being Called a Man, Against Whom and How Does He Fight, and Does the Verse License Human War? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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Elder Kepha Arcemont, Founder

miqdashbethel.ai • miqdashbethel@gmail.com

The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	✠ ISLAM
The Aramaic Targum Onkelos renders the verse " Yahweh is master of the victory of wars. " Rashi reads <i>ish</i> (man) as <i>ba'al</i> (master), and the Mekhilta teaches that Yahweh " fights with His Name " and keeps His mercy toward all creatures even in battle. The Song is sung in synagogues every morning and on the seventh day of Passover.	The church inherited the Song whole. Marcion (2nd century) rejected the warrior God of the Tanakh, and the church rejected Marcion. The New Testament takes up the warrior image in the armor of Isaiah 59:17 (Ephesians 6:10–17) and in the rider who " judges and makes war " in righteousness (Revelation 19:11). The Tanakh speaks first.	The Qur'an retells the drowning of Pharaoh (Q. 2:50; 10:90–92; 26:63–66) and says of Badr: " You did not kill them, but Allah killed them " (Q. 8:17). It never calls Allah a man: " There is nothing like unto Him " (Q. 42:11). The Qur'an's "Allah fought for them" stands closer to the Hebrew than its denial of likeness does to the word <i>ish</i> .

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never

as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh's** own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh's** covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to one verse and the questions it raises: what ***ish milchamah*** (man of war) means in Hebrew, whether **Yahweh** is being called a man, against whom and how He fights, what the ancient translations did with the verse, and whether it gives any nation a license for war. **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אלהים) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books are cited by their English names. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold. Verse numbers follow the English version; where the Hebrew numbering differs, it is given in brackets on first citation. Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic commentary, the ancient translations, New Testament texts, church writers, the Qur'an, and ancient Near Eastern texts are cited as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	The idiom of <i>ish</i> (man); the Sea and the Song; the Name revealed; Yahweh fighting for Israel; the presumptuous battle; no form seen

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah	The commander of Yahweh's host; the battle is Yahweh's; the warrior who turns against His own people; the end of war
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Ruth, Lamentations, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles	Yahweh mighty in battle; the one who makes wars cease; trust in the Name, not chariots

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Ancient translations	Septuagint (Greek) Exodus 15:3; Samaritan Pentateuch; Targum Onkelos; Palestinian Targumim	How the oldest readers handled the word "man"
Rabbinic literature	Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Shirah 4; Rashi on Exodus 15:3	The classic Jewish reading; master of war, fighting by the Name, mercy kept in battle
Second Temple texts	Judith 9:7; 16:2; War Scroll (1QM) XII	Echoes of the Greek reading; the warrior image at Qumran
New Testament and church writers	Ephesians 6:10–17; Revelation 19:11; Tertullian, <i>Against Marcion</i> ; Origen, <i>Homilies on Exodus</i>	The warrior image in the church, and the Marcionite rejection of it
Qur'an	Q. 2:50; 8:9, 17; 10:90–92; 22:39–40; 26:63–66; 42:11; 112:4	Pharaoh's drowning; "Allah killed them"; the denial of likeness
Ancient Near East and scholarship	Ugaritic Baal Cycle (KTU 1.2); F. M. Cross, <i>Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic</i> (1973); P. D. Miller, <i>The Divine Warrior in Early Israel</i> (1973); J. Hoffmeier (Biblica 67, 1986); E. Tov (2023)	The divine-warrior background; Pharaoh as warrior-king; the textual history of the verse

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — A HARD VERSE HELD IN THE OPEN

I-A. The Questions as They Are Asked

Few verses in the Torah make readers more uneasy than this one. Some are embarrassed by it and soften it; some seize it and wave it over their own wars. The questions put to this Institution are direct:

First: what does *ish milchamah* (man of war) actually mean in Hebrew?

Second: is **Yahweh** being called a man — does He have a body?

Third: against whom does He fight, and why?

Fourth: how does He fight, and why does the verse end with "**Yahweh is His Name**"?

Fifth: does this verse give any nation, church, or movement a warrant to call its own wars **Yahweh's**?

The Library has touched this verse before. **Doc 202** (*The Covenant of War*) opened with **Exodus 15:3** and then moved to the law of warfare in **Deuteronomy 20**. The present document stays with the verse itself, in its chapter, in its Hebrew, and in its ancient translations, and it corrects three small points in Doc 202 (Section XI).

I-B. The Verse

"**Yahweh is a man of war; Yahweh is His Name.**" (Exodus 15:3).

The Hebrew is four words and a repeated Name: יהוה איש מלחמה יהוה שמו. There is no verb. **The line is a confession, not a narrative:** it says who Yahweh is, and it says it twice — once by what He does, once by what He is called. Every finding below is graded. A finding is corroborated when two or more independent Tanakh witnesses carry it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**); Single witness when only one text carries it; Not in the text when it is taught but the Tanakh does not say it.

II. THE SETTING — THE SEA, THE SONG, AND AN ISRAEL THAT DID NOT FIGHT

The verse cannot be read apart from the night before it. Israel stood between the sea and Pharaoh's six hundred chosen chariots (**Exodus 14:7**), and the people cried out that it would have been better to serve Egypt (**Exodus 14:11–12**). Mosheh answered:

"Do not fear. Stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh which He will do for you today... Yahweh will fight for you, and you shall be silent." (Exodus 14:13–14).

The Hebrew is *Yahweh yillachem lachem ve-attem tacharishun* (Yahweh will fight for you, and you shall be silent), יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם תַּחֲרִשׁוּן. The verb *lacham* (to fight), לָחֵם, H3898, is the root of *milchamah* (war), מִלְחָמָה, H4421. The battle of **Exodus 15:3** is the battle promised in **Exodus 14:14**, and Israel's only assignment in it was *charash* (to be silent / be still), חָרַשׁ, H2790.

The second witness comes from the enemy. When the chariot wheels clogged in the sea bed, the Egyptians said:

"Let us flee from before Israel, for Yahweh fights for them against Egypt." (**Exodus 14:25**).

Egypt's army confessed the verse before Israel sang it. Then the text records what Israel saw — **"the great hand which Yahweh had done against Egypt"** — and that the people **"feared Yahweh, and believed in Yahweh and in Mosheh His servant"** (**Exodus 14:31**). The Song follows immediately (**Exodus 15:1**), and Miryam leads the women in its opening line (**Exodus 15:20–21**).

II-A. The Shape of the Song

VERSES	MOVEMENT	WHAT IT SAYS OF THE WARRIOR
15:1–3	Opening praise	Horse and rider thrown into the sea; "my strength and song... my salvation"; "a man of war; Yahweh is His Name"
15:4–10	The battle retold	Pharaoh's chariots cast down; Yahweh's right hand shatters the enemy; the wind of His nostrils piles up the waters; the enemy boasts, the sea covers him
15:11–12	The incomparable one	"Who is like You among the gods, Yahweh?" — the victory is also a verdict on the gods of Egypt
15:13–17	The march to the sanctuary	Covenant love leads the redeemed; the nations tremble; Yahweh plants His people at His holy place
15:18	The kingship	"Yahweh shall reign forever and ever" — the war ends in a throne

Finding — the setting: the "war" of Exodus 15:3 is a battle in which Israel did not lift a weapon. Yahweh fought; Israel was silent; Egypt itself testified who fought. Corroborated (**Exodus 14:14, 25, 31; 15:3–10**).

III. THE WORD STUDY — WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS

The vocabulary of the verse and its chapter is precise. The table sets out the terms this study relies on.

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>ish</i> (man / husband / master), אִישׁ	H376	A man; also a husband, a champion, or one characterized by a thing ("man of words," "man of Elohim")	Exodus 4:10; Deuteronomy 33:1; Ruth 1:3
<i>milchamah</i> (war / battle), מִלְחָמָה	H4421	Battle, warfare; from <i>lacham</i> (to fight)	Exodus 15:3; 17:16
<i>lacham</i> (to fight), לָחַם	H3898	To do battle; in the reflexive, to fight for or against	Exodus 14:14, 25
<i>shem</i> (name), שֵׁם	H8034	Name as identity, reputation, and revealed character	Exodus 3:15; 9:16; 15:3
<i>gibbor</i> (mighty one / hero), גִּבּוֹר	H1368	A champion, a warrior of proven strength	Psalms 24:8; Isaiah 42:13
<i>tseva'ot</i> (hosts / armies), צְבָאוֹת	H6635	Armies; the host of heaven and of Israel	1 Samuel 17:45
<i>yeshu'ah</i> (salvation / deliverance), יְשׁוּעָה	H3444	Rescue, victory; the outcome of the battle	Exodus 14:13; 15:2
<i>yamin</i> (right hand), יָמִין	H3225	The strong hand; the seat of power in battle	Exodus 15:6, 12
<i>ruach</i> (wind / breath / spirit), רוּחַ	H7307	The breath of His nostrils — the weapon at the sea	Exodus 14:21; 15:8, 10
<i>charash</i> (to be silent / be still), חָרַשׁ	H2790	To hold one's peace; Israel's role at the sea	Exodus 14:14
<i>ba'al</i> (owner / master), בָּעַל	H1167	Master of a thing; Rashi's gloss on <i>ish</i>	Exodus 21:28
<i>malach</i> (to reign), מָלַךְ	H4427	To be king; the end of the Song	Exodus 15:18

Three lexical observations govern what follows.

First, *ish* (man) joined to a noun is a Hebrew idiom of characterization. Mosheh says "I am not a man of words" (*ish devarim*, Exodus 4:10); he is called "the man of Elohim" (Deuteronomy 33:1); Esav is "a man knowing the hunt" (Genesis 25:27). The phrase names what a person is known for. *Ish milchamah* (man of war) means a warrior — one whose identity is known by battle — which is how the Jewish Publication Society's 1985 translation renders it: "The LORD, the Warrior."

Second, the same phrase is used of human soldiers: "all the men of war" of the wilderness generation died before the Land (Deuteronomy 2:14, 16; Joshua 5:4, 6), and David is called "a man of war" (1 Samuel 16:18). Applied to Yahweh, the phrase borrows a soldier's title for the One who won a battle with no soldiers.

Third, the verse is built as a parallel line. The first half names Yahweh by His deed; the second names Him by His Name. In the Song the Name is the answer to the question Pharaoh asked in the first confrontation: "Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice?" (Exodus 5:2). Exodus 15:3 is the answer, given at the water's edge.

IV. IS YAHWEH BEING CALLED A MAN?

The word *ish* (man) is what troubles most readers. Tanakh answers the question itself, in plain words, three times.

"El is not a man, that He should lie." (Numbers 23:19).

"The Eternal One of Israel will not lie or relent, for He is not a man, that He should relent." (1 Samuel 15:29).

"I will not execute the fierceness of My anger... for I am El and not a man, the Holy One in your midst." (Hosea 11:9).

Hosea's line is *כִּי אֵל אֲנֹכִי וְלֹא אִישׁ* — *ki El anochi ve-lo ish* (for I am El and not a man). It uses the same word as Exodus 15:3, and it is cited against a literal reading by the Mekhilta itself: "Is it possible to say this? ... For I am El and not a man" (Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Shirah 4). The Torah adds a fourth witness from the other direction: at Sinai "you saw no form" (*temunah*, form / likeness), so Israel must not make an image of "male or female" (Deuteronomy 4:15–16).

The ancient Jewish readers heard the word as an idiom. Targum Onkelos renders the verse *וְיְהוָה מֶלֶךְ הַמִּלְחָמָה* — "Yahweh is master of the victory of wars; Yahweh is His Name." Rashi

explains that *ish* here means *ba'al* (master), as in "**Elimelech, the ish of Naomi**" — her husband, her lord (**Ruth 1:3**) — and as in David's charge to Shelomoh, "**be strong and become a man**" (**1 Kings 2:2**), meaning a mighty one.

Finding — is Yahweh a man? Yahweh is not a man, and has no form that Israel saw. Corroborated (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Hosea 11:9; Deuteronomy 4:15–16). *Ish milchamah* (man of war) is the Hebrew idiom for a warrior, applied to Yahweh to say that the battle at the sea was His and His alone. To read it as a claim that Yahweh has a body is **Not in the text.**

V. HOW THE ANCIENT TRANSLATIONS HANDLED THE VERSE

The verse is one of the few places where the three great ancient forms of the Torah all read differently. Each reading shows how early readers felt the weight of the word *ish* (man).

WITNESS	READING	WHAT IT DOES
Masoretic Text (the received Hebrew)	יְהוָה אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה — "Yahweh is a man of war"	Keeps the bold word; the reading the Tanakh preserves
Samaritan Pentateuch	יְהוָה גִּיבּוֹר בְּמִלְחָמָה — "Yahweh is a hero (<i>gibbor</i>) in war"	Replaces "man" with the synonymous <i>gibbor</i> (mighty one), describing the deed rather than the person
Septuagint (Greek, 3rd century BCE)	κύριος συντριβὼν πολέμους — "the Lord who shatters wars"	Turns the warrior into the one who breaks war itself
Targum Onkelos (Aramaic)	"Yahweh is master of the victory of wars"	Reads "man" as "master" and makes the victory the point
Palestinian Targumim, Peshitta	"Yahweh is a hero (<i>gibbara</i>) of wars"	The same softening found in the Samaritan text

Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University, editor of the official Dead Sea Scrolls publications, judges the received Hebrew to be the oldest of the three (TheTorah.com, 2023). By the ordinary rule of textual study, the harder reading is more likely original, because scribes soften hard words; they rarely invent them. Tov explains the Samaritan *gibbor* (hero) as a deliberate softening from the Second Temple period, and the Greek "shatters" as a probable misreading of that softened text: in the old spelling without vowel letters, גִּבּוֹר (*gibbor*, hero) and שֹׁבֵר (*shover*, one who breaks) differ by a single letter.

Other scholars, such as Larry Perkins and Martin Rösel, read the Greek as a deliberate theological choice rather than a misreading. Both explanations agree that the Hebrew came first.

The Greek reading was not lost. The Book of Judith twice calls **Elohim** "the Lord who shatters wars" (Judith 9:7; 16:2), showing that some Greek-speaking Jews prayed the verse in that form. Remarkably, the Greek idea is itself taught by the Tanakh in other places:

"He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two." (Psalms 46:9 [Hebrew 46:10]).

"There He broke the flashing arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and war." (Psalms 76:3 [Hebrew 76:4]).

"Bow and sword and war I will break from the land, and I will make them lie down in safety." (Hosea 2:18 [Hebrew 2:20]).

Psalms 46 uses *mashbit milchamot* (He makes wars cease), מַשְׁבִּית מִלְחָמוֹת; Psalms 76 and Hosea 2 use the very verb the Greek translator may have read, *shavar* (to break), שָׁבַר, H7665, with *milchamah* (war) as its object. And the Psalm that preserves the Samaritan wording is in the Tanakh too:

"Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle" — *Yahweh gibbor milchamah* (Yahweh mighty in battle), יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה (Psalms 24:8).

Finding — the ancient translations: the received Hebrew, "a man of war," is the reading the covenant text preserves, and it is the harder and older reading. Corroborated by the Masoretic Text and by the direction of change in the two later readings. The softer readings are not errors of doctrine: that **Yahweh** is *gibbor milchamah* (mighty in battle) and that He *shavar milchamah* (breaks war) are both taught elsewhere in the Tanakh. **Corroborated** (Psalms 24:8; 46:9; 76:3; Hosea 2:18). The warrior of Exodus 15:3 and the war-breaker of Psalms 46 are the same Yahweh.

VI. AGAINST WHOM DOES YAHWEH FIGHT?

VI-A. Against the Oppressor

The enemy at the sea is named: Pharaoh, his chariots, and his officers (Exodus 15:4). The Torah has already told why. Pharaoh ordered every Hebrew son thrown into the Nile (Exodus 1:22), and **Yahweh** said at the bush:

"I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I have come down to deliver them." (Exodus 3:7–8).

The Song itself records the enemy's own boast:

"I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my desire shall be satisfied on them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them" (Exodus 15:9).

The warrior of **Exodus 15:3** fights against an empire that drowned children and hunted slaves. Mekhilta noticed the measure-for-measure pattern: the army of the king who threw sons into the water went down into the water (Mekhilta, Shirah 4, on **Exodus 15:4**).

VI-B. Against the Gods of Egypt

"Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Yahweh." (Exodus 12:12).

Numbers 33:4 repeats it: **"upon their gods also Yahweh executed judgments."** The Song asks the question the plagues had answered: **"Who is like You among the gods, Yahweh?"** — מִי־כַמֶּנְךָ יְהוָה בְּאֵלִים (Exodus 15:11). Pharaoh was presented in his own inscriptions as a warrior-king who smites his enemies with a mighty arm; James Hoffmeier has argued that the Torah's **"strong hand and outstretched arm"** (Deuteronomy 4:34; 26:8) answers that royal Egyptian image directly (*Biblica* 67, 1986). The contest of **Exodus 15** is between two claimed warriors, and only one of them was left standing.

VI-C. The Sea Is Not His Enemy

The neighbors of Israel told of a storm god who fought the sea. In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Baal battles Yam, the sea god, and wins his kingship by defeating him (KTU 1.2). Frank Moore Cross and Patrick Miller showed that the Tanakh knows this imagery and uses it (Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 1973; Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*, 1973); the poets speak of **Yahweh** breaking **"the heads of the sea monsters"** (Psalms 74:13) and cutting **"Rahav"** (Isaiah 51:9–10).

But **Exodus 15** turns the old story inside out. The sea is not a rival god; it is a tool. **"With the wind of Your nostrils the waters were piled up" (Exodus 15:8); "You blew with Your wind; the sea covered them" (Exodus 15:10).** The enemy is a human empire, and the sea obeys. In Ugarit the warrior wins a throne by defeating the sea; in the Song **Yahweh** already rules the sea and uses it to free slaves, and His throne is proclaimed at the end (**Exodus 15:18**). The shared vocabulary is real; the theology is opposite.

VI-D. Against His Own People, When They Become Pharaoh

The warrior does not belong to Israel. The prophets say plainly that He turns against His own people when they forsake the covenant:

"They rebelled and grieved His holy Spirit; therefore He turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them." (Isaiah 63:10).

"I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, in anger, in fury, and in great wrath." (Jeremiah 21:5).

"The Lord has become like an enemy; He has swallowed up Israel." (Lamentations 2:5).

Jeremiah's words are the Exodus words — **"outstretched hand"** and **"strong arm"** — turned against Jerusalem. The warrior fights against the oppressor, and when Israel's kings oppress, He fights against Israel.

Finding — against whom: Yahweh fights against the oppressor, against the false gods that sanctify oppression, and against His own covenant people when they break the covenant. **Corroborated** (Exodus 3:7–8; 12:12; 15:9–11; Numbers 33:4; Isaiah 63:10; Jeremiah 21:5; Lamentations 2:5). That He is permanently on the side of any nation regardless of its conduct is **Not in the text.**

VII. HOW DOES YAHWEH FIGHT? — "YAHWEH IS HIS NAME"

The second half of the verse is not filler. The Song could have ended the line with a title; it ends it with the Name.

VII-A. The Name Revealed for This Battle

At the bush **Yahweh** gave His Name for this deliverance:

"This is My Name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations" — יְהוָה שְׁמִי לְעֹלָם (Exodus 3:15).

Before the plagues He tied the Name to the coming rescue:

"I am Yahweh; I will bring you out from under the burdens of Egypt... I will redeem you with an outstretched arm" (Exodus 6:6).

And He told Pharaoh the purpose of the whole contest:

"that My Name may be declared in all the earth" (Exodus 9:16).

When Israel sings "**Yahweh is His Name**" at the sea, the purpose of **Exodus 9:16** has been fulfilled.

VII-B. He Fights by His Name, Not by Weapons

The Mekhilta lists the weapons the Tanakh assigns to **Yahweh** in poetry — sword (**Psalms 45:3**), armor and helmet (**Isaiah 59:17**), spear and arrows (**Habakkuk 3:11**) — and then asks whether He needs any of them. Its answer, which Rashi repeats: "**It is with His Name that He fights, and He has no need of any of these**" (Mekhilta, Shirah 4). The Tanakh supplies the witnesses:

"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the Name of Yahweh of hosts... for the battle is Yahweh's." (1 Samuel 17:45, 47).

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the Name of Yahweh our Elohim." (Psalms 20:7 [Hebrew 20:8]).

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says Yahweh of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6).

At the sea the weapons were wind, water, and night (**Exodus 14:20–21**). Israel carried arms out of Egypt (**Exodus 13:18**) but used none of them. The Mennonite scholar Millard Lind drew the same conclusion in *Yahweh Is a Warrior* (1980): the Exodus pattern is a deliverance by **Yahweh** alone, not a partnership in which Israel's army does the fighting and **Yahweh** blesses it.

VII-C. The Warrior Keeps His Mercy

The Mekhilta draws a second meaning from the repeated Name. A human warrior in his fury strikes even his own kin, and a king at war cannot hear the petitions of his subjects or feed his soldiers. "**Yahweh is a man of war**" — **He fought against Egypt; "Yahweh is His Name" — He has mercy on all His creatures**, and it cites the proclamation of the Name at Sinai: "**Yahweh, Yahweh, El merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in covenant love and truth**" (**Exodus 34:6**). This is rabbinic commentary, not scripture — but the Tanakh itself pairs the warrior with the one who "**gives food to all flesh**" in the same Psalm that recounts the sea (**Psalms 136:15, 25**), and Zephaniah joins the two in one line:

"Yahweh your Elohim in your midst is a mighty one who saves; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will be quiet in His love." (Zephaniah 3:17).

Finding — how Yahweh fights: Yahweh fights by His own power and Name, without needing human weapons or human armies, and the victory is meant to make His Name known. Corroborated (**Exodus 9:16; 14:14; 15:3; 1 Samuel 17:45–47; Psalms 20:7; Zechariah 4:6**). That the warrior keeps His mercy in battle is **Corroborated** as a Tanakh pairing (**Exodus 34:6; Psalms 136:15, 25; Zephaniah 3:17**); the specific reading of the repeated Name as mercy is rabbinic commentary.

VIII. FIVE WITNESSES — THE WARRIOR ACROSS THE TANAKH

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, **Exodus 15:3** does not stand alone. The same confession runs through every division of the Tanakh.

#	WITNESS	WHAT IT ADDS
1	Deuteronomy 1:30; 3:22	"Yahweh your Elohim who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt." Mosheh sets the sea as the pattern for every later battle.
2	Joshua 5:13–15; 10:14, 42	The commander of Yahweh's host appears with a drawn sword. Asked "Are you for us or for our enemies?" he answers "No" — לא — "but as commander of the host of Yahweh I have now come." Later: "Yahweh fought for Israel."
3	1 Samuel 17:47; 2 Chronicles 20:15	"The battle is Yahweh's" — כִּי לַיהוָה הַמִּלְחָמָה — spoken by David and, generations later, by the prophet Yachaziel: "the battle is not yours, but Elohim's."
4	Isaiah 42:13; Psalms 24:8	"Yahweh goes out like a mighty one; like a man of wars He stirs up zeal" — ke-ish milchamot (like a man of wars). Isaiah repeats the phrase of Exodus 15:3, with "like."
5	Habakkuk 3:8–15; Nehemiah 4:20 [Hebrew 4:14]	The prophet sees Yahweh ride against the sea "for the salvation of Your people"; the wall-builders are told "our Elohim will fight for us."

The fourth witness is worth noticing. Where **Exodus 15:3** says **ish milchamah** (a man of war), **Isaiah 42:13** says **ke-ish milchamot** (like a man of wars), **כְּאִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת**. The prophet himself reads the Torah's phrase as a comparison — which is exactly how Section IV found it must be read.

Finding: that **Yahweh** fights for His people as He did at the sea is carried by five independent witnesses across the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. **Corroborated.**

IX. THE WARRIOR WHO ENDS WAR

The Song does not end on the battlefield. It ends at a sanctuary (**Exodus 15:17**) and a throne (**Exodus 15:18**). The war was the means; the kingship and the dwelling place were the goal. The prophets carry the same line forward to its end:

"He shall judge between the nations... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4; compare Micah 4:3).

"I will cut off the chariot from Ephrayim and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off, and He shall speak peace to the nations." (Zechariah 9:10).

Here the three ancient readings of **Exodus 15:3** meet. The Hebrew says **Yahweh** is the warrior; the Greek says He shatters wars; the Psalms say He makes wars cease to the end of the earth (**Psalms 46:9**). The Tanakh teaches all three, in that order. The One who fights is the only One who can end fighting, because no one else can defeat the powers that make war.

Doc 202 recorded the other side of the same truth: David, "**a man of wars**" (*ish milchamot*), was not permitted to build the house of **Yahweh** because he had shed much blood (**1 Chronicles 22:8; 28:3**), and the house was built by Shelomoh, whose name carries *shalom* (peace).

The title that is praise when sung of Yahweh at the sea is a disqualification when it belongs to a man at the sanctuary. Warfare is **Yahweh's** prerogative; it is never the covenant people's identity.

Finding: **Yahweh's** warfare aims at the end of warfare, at His kingship, and at His dwelling among His people. **Corroborated** (**Exodus 15:17–18; Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Zechariah 9:10; Psalms 46:9**).

X. WHAT THE VERSE DOES NOT MEAN — THE TEST OF "YAHWEH IS ON OUR SIDE"

Exodus 15:3 has been sung over crusades, colonial wars, and modern campaigns of every kind. The Tanakh itself tests that use, and it fails the test on three counts.

First: the commander does not take sides. When Yehoshua asked the armed figure outside Yericho, "**Are you for us, or for our adversaries?**", the answer was "**No**" (**Joshua 5:13–14**). The question is not whether **Yahweh** is on our side, but whether we are under His command. Yehoshua's response was to fall on his face and remove his sandals (**Joshua 5:14–15**).

Second: a battle Yahweh has not commanded is lost. After the report of the spies, Israel decided to go up and fight on its own. Mosheh warned them, "**Do not go up, for Yahweh is not among you**"; they went anyway and were beaten back to Chormah (**Numbers 14:41–45**). At Even-ha-Ezer, Israel carried the ark into battle as a talisman and lost both the battle and the ark (**1 Samuel 4:3–11**). The presence of **Yahweh** in war cannot be summoned by carrying His symbols or singing His songs.

Third: the pattern of the sea is Israel standing still. The verse describes a war Israel did not fight (Section II). It cannot be turned into a mandate for a nation to fight, because its whole point is that the nation did not.

"The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance belongs to Yahweh" (Proverbs 21:31);

"a king is not saved by the size of an army" (Psalms 33:16).

The law of war that **Doc 202** set out — the mandated offer of peace, the protection of the fruit tree, the purification of soldiers after battle (**Deuteronomy 20:10, 19–20; Numbers 31:19**) — governs whatever war the covenant people fight. **Exodus 15:3** does not suspend that law. It stands above it, as the reminder of who the true warrior is.

Finding: that any nation, church, or movement today may cite **Exodus 15:3** as **Yahweh's** endorsement of its war is **Not in the text**. The Tanakh's own witnesses run against it (**Joshua 5:13–14; Numbers 14:41–45; 1 Samuel 4:3–11**). Corroborated.

XI. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION READS THE WARRIOR

The table sets the three traditions against the Tanakh's own findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only, in keeping with the standing rule of this document.

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
How the verse is read	Onkelos: "master of the victory of wars." Rashi: <i>ish</i> means <i>ba'al</i> (master); He fights by His Name. The Mekhilta: warrior at the sea, "elder full of mercy" at Sinai — one and the same, "so as not to give the nations a pretext to say there are two powers."	The church kept the Song in its worship and its canon. Marcion rejected the warrior God as a lesser deity; Tertullian's <i>Against Marcion</i> answered that the God who judges and the God who saves are one. Origen's <i>Homilies on Exodus</i> read the battle spiritually, as the soul's war against sin.	The Qur'an retells Pharaoh's pursuit and drowning (Q. 26:63–66; 10:90–92) and ascribes victory to Allah alone: "You did not kill them, but Allah killed them" (Q. 8:17), with angels sent at Badr (Q. 8:9). It denies any likeness: "There is nothing like unto Him" (Q. 42:11; 112:4).

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☪ ISLAM
Covenant strength	The rabbinic reading guards both halves of the verse — the warrior and the Name — and names the danger of a "second power." It matches Hosea 11:9 and Deuteronomy 4:15–16 .	The rejection of Marcion preserved the Tanakh's witness that the warrior and the merciful one are the same Yahweh (Exodus 15:3; 34:6) . Ephesians 6 takes its armor from Isaiah 59:17 , where the armor is righteousness and salvation.	"Allah killed them" is close to Exodus 14:14 and 1 Samuel 17:47 : the battle belongs to the Deity, not the fighter. Permission to fight is given to "those who have been wronged" (Q. 22:39), the oppressed rather than the oppressor.
Covenant departure or risk	The War Scroll from Qumran (1QM XII) sang of "the Hero of war in our congregation" while planning a war of its own sect against all nations — the verse enlisted for a human campaign. Later polemical uses of Amalek traditions carry the same risk.	From the Crusades onward, "the Lord is a man of war" was sung over wars of empire. Some theologians have also read the verse as a literal preview of a divine person in human form; the Tanakh's own reading of ish here is idiom (Section IV).	The Qur'anic denial of likeness can erase what the Hebrew insists on: that the Deity acts personally, on a real battlefield of history. And later doctrines of expansionist war went beyond the defensive scope of Q. 2:190 and 22:39.
Covenant witness	Reciting the Song daily keeps the sea, not the sword, at the center of Jewish memory of deliverance.	The Christian hope that the warrior "judges and makes war" in righteousness (Revelation 19:11) is, read from the Tanakh outward, Isaiah 11:4 and 63:1–6 — judgment belongs to the Holy One, not to armies that claim Him.	Islam's insistence that victory comes from Allah alone restates the lesson of the sea for a third community: the horse is prepared, but deliverance belongs to the Most High (Proverbs 21:31).

XII. CORRECTIONS AND REFINEMENTS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Library's rule is that its own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else's. Three points in **Doc 202** (*The Covenant of War*, July 2026) should be corrected when it is next revised.

Correction 1 — the translation credited for Exodus 15:3. Doc 202 (Section I-A) quotes the verse as "Yahweh is a man of war; Yahweh is His name" and credits it to JPS 1985. The JPS 1985

translation reads "**The LORD, the Warrior — LORD is His name!**" The wording Doc 202 quotes is a literal rendering, and the credit should read "literal working translation."

Correction 2 — the Isaiah 9:6 citation. Doc 202 (Section I-B) prints the reference as "Yeshayahu [Isaiah] 9:6–5." It should read **Isaiah 9:6 [Hebrew 9:5]**.

Correction 3 — Chemosh on the Mesha Stele. Doc 202 (Section V-A) says the stele records "Mesha's own king, Chemosh" commanding him to attack Nebo. Chemosh was the god of Moab, not its king; the sentence should read "Mesha's god, Chemosh."

These are small points and do not change Doc 202's findings. Doc 202 also predates the September 22, 2026 English-book-name and location rules; its Hebrew book names and Louisiana address line should be updated when it is revised.

XIII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON EXODUS 15:3

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	The battle at the sea was Yahweh's alone. Israel was commanded to stand still and be silent, and Egypt itself confessed who fought.	Exodus 14:13–14, 25, 31; 15:3
II	<i>Isb milchamah</i> (man of war) is the Hebrew idiom for a warrior. Yahweh is not a man, has no form Israel saw, and must not be imaged as male or female.	Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Hosea 11:9; Deuteronomy 4:15–16; Isaiah 42:13
III	Yahweh fights against the oppressor and against the gods that sanctify oppression, and He turns against His own people when they become oppressors.	Exodus 3:7–8; 12:12; Isaiah 63:10; Jeremiah 21:5
IV	Yahweh fights by His Name and His own power, not by human weapons, so that His Name may be declared in all the earth.	Exodus 9:16; 1 Samuel 17:45–47; Psalms 20:7; Zechariah 4:6
V	The warrior and the merciful one are the same Yahweh ; there are not two powers.	Exodus 15:3; 34:6; Deuteronomy 32:39; Zephaniah 3:17

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
VI	No nation, church, or movement may claim Exodus 15:3 as Yahweh's endorsement of its war. The question is not whether He is on our side, but whether we are under His command.	Joshua 5:13–14; Numbers 14:41–45; 1 Samuel 4:3–11
VII	The warrior's goal is the end of war, His kingship, and His dwelling among His people.	Exodus 15:17–18; Psalms 46:9; Isaiah 2:4; Zechariah 9:10

XIV. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Behind the question about **Exodus 15:3** there is usually one of two people: one who is ashamed of a warrior God, or one who wants to march under Him. Tanakh's answer to both is fivefold.

First: do not be ashamed of the verse. The oldest Hebrew text says it plainly, and the later softenings only prove how plain it was (Section V). An El who does not fight Pharaoh leaves slaves in the brickyards forever (**Exodus 3:7–8**).

Second: do not make Him a man. The phrase is a warrior's title, not a portrait. "**I am El and not a man**" (**Hosea 11:9**).

Third: know whom He fights. He fights the oppressor, and He does not exempt His own people when they oppress (**Isaiah 63:10; Jeremiah 21:5**). Anyone who claims Him as an ally must first ask whether he is standing where Pharaoh stood.

Fourth: know how He fights. By His Name, by wind and water, with Israel standing still (**Exodus 14:14; 1 Samuel 17:45**). The covenant believer's part in the battle of the sea was trust and silence.

Fifth: know where the war is going. The Song ends at the sanctuary and the throne (**Exodus 15:17–18**), and the prophets end at plowshares (**Isaiah 2:4**).

The Warrior at the sea is the One who makes wars cease to the end of the earth.

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"Yah is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation; this is my El, and I will praise Him; my father's Elohim, and I will exalt Him. Yahweh is a man of war; Yahweh is His Name."

Exodus 15:2–3 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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