

Song of Moses

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Study Given by W D. Frazee—March 6,

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints” Revelation 15:2-3.

This is the remnant. These have been taken from the last generation. They are Christ's legion. They plant the banner of eternal triumph. And thank God, you and I are called to membership in that group. We are told to strive with all our powers to be among the 144,000.

It is significant that they sing the song of Moses as well as the song of the Lamb. I suppose it must be clear that this includes entering into some of the experiences of Moses.

We have studied how God got Moses ready for his work. We noticed the miracle of his preservation when he was just a little baby in the ark. We noticed the education he received at his mother's knee. Up until the time he was twelve years of age he received a most thorough training in the things of God from a mother who loved God and taught her little boy to obey Him.

We think of the outstanding experience Moses had in the court of Pharaoh until he was 40 years of age. He learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. We think of the choice he made to renounce all the glory of Egypt and cast his lot with the people of God, the humble, despised, race of slaves.

As Moses put himself into the work of delivering Israel, he failed in his first attempt. So long had he been saturated with the philosophy of Egypt in how to get things done that even though he had never bowed to their idols still he was not fitted to do the work of God. He wanted to do God's work, but he was permeated with the ideas of Egypt. So he killed a man. He thought his brethren would rally, and together they would secure their freedom.

But God had other plans. Moses fled. He considered himself a failure. Out in the desert of Median he herded sheep for 40 years. There, in a special sense, God undertook his training. There he unlearned the wisdom of Egypt. Instead of human reason, faith came to be the dominating thing in his life. He reached the point where

he would do anything that God said no matter how unreasonable it looked. And most important, in those 40 years he learned to put aside the law of force and to accept instead the law of love as a way to get things done.

God let him learn that lesson on sheep and lambs. And when we think that his training in the military schools of Egypt made such an impression on his mind that it took him 40 years to unlearn the law of force and learn the law of love, we can see the great importance of this principle as God sees it, and we can see the tremendous hold that the other principle gets on the minds of men.

If we ever sing the song of Moses, we shall thoroughly unlearn all the principles of rivalry, competition, human force, trying to beat the other fellow. And the better the case in which we are engaged the worse it is to use the weapons of hell. God needs not to borrow the armament of Satan to fight the battles of heaven.

When Moses had fully learned the way of the Lord, and how to get things done, God called him to leave the sheep and take Israel. I suppose it must have been true that as Moses looked back on it, hard as had been the experience of learning to deal with sheep he felt it was easy compared to dealing with Israel.

That is always true when God is carrying on the training of a man. He leads us from the easy to the more difficult. And whenever you and I thoroughly master the lessons of today we are ready for the lessons of tomorrow where the lessons are harder and more difficult.

That is why I feel sorry whenever I see people trying to maneuver or cry or whine or complain their way out of a hard situation. Oh, how many people think that if they could only get out of the hard problem they are in, what a wonderful thing it would be. But let me tell you, if God is leading you, He is going to help you solve the problem that He has brought you face to face with, and then He is going to lead you through that into a more difficult problem.

Oh, to learn the sweet lesson of patience and resignation and trust what Moses learned out there with the sheep and lambs. Some day we are going to see Moses and sing that song with him—that song of experience he learned to sing.

After Moses had been out in the desert for 40 years God met him at the burning bush, and called him to come down to Egypt and deliver His people. After a series of plagues upon Egypt, Israel was freed from bondage. They crossed the Red Sea and entered upon that long trip to the land of Canaan.

The particular thing I would like to study with you in the life of Moses is how he dealt with sin. How he dealt with the sin problem as he found it in Israel. In connection with that, I want to study with you how Aaron dealt with it. The two men were brothers. They had different ways of dealing with the sin problem. And we shall understand each man's methods best as we view them in contrast with his brother's methods.

And in that contrast we shall find very important lessons for us today. If we will notice and observe, each one of us shall find either in Aaron or Moses our ideal—the type we feel represents the pattern of dealing with sin.

I find a very interesting statement by the apostle Paul. He is talking specifically about the children of Israel in the desert. The very people we are studying, and the very time we are studying.

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:
and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the
ends of the world are come” 1 Corinthians 10:11.

Are we the people upon whom the ends of the world is come? Yes. Well, here is something that has been written for us. What is it? The experience of the children of Israel. And those things that happened to them were written down for ensamples, or types. So when we study the experience of Israel we are not just studying some history of what took place back there thousands of years ago. We are not just getting acquainted with some individuals that lived back there. We are studying the examples for the remnant down here today.

Do you suppose that what Moses did back there will be done down here today? Yes. Do you suppose what Aaron did back there will be done today? Yes. Do you suppose the different things the Israelites did back there either have been done or will be done today? Without a question. All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Don't misunderstand me. That doesn't mean that God made it necessary for us to make all the mistakes Israel made. In fact, He says He wrote it down to keep us from doing it.

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we
should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted”
1 Corinthians 10:6.

We are not fatalists. Oh, no. We don't believe that anybody has to sin, has to fall, has to fail. Not at all. But those things were written down to keep us from following their wrong example. So Paul says:

“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is
written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose
up to play” 1 Corinthians 10:7.

Somebody says, “Well, is it idolatry to eat and drink and rise up to play?”

It is sometimes. And it is worthy to notice how they did those things, and what was idolatry and how God dealt with it, and how Moses and Aaron related themselves to the problem.

With this background, let's go back to the 3^{second} and 3^{third} chapters of Exodus. These two chapters tell the story that Paul is alluding to in the verses we have just read.

Soon after they left Egypt, Israel came to Mount Sinai. They stayed there for many months. God made a covenant with them there, and they promised to do everything that God said. They pledged themselves repeatedly to keep His law. God came down upon Mount Sinai and with His own voice spoke those Ten Commandments which he later gave to Moses written with His finger upon the tables of stone.

Not long after God spoke the law upon Mount Sinai He called Moses up into the mount. There He gave Moses directions for making the sanctuary which was to be the place where God dwelt with Israel. As far as I know Moses didn't tell the people how long he was going to be up there in the mountain. In fact, I doubt he knew how long he was going to be up there for the simple reason that God didn't tell him. So the people, left in charge of Aaron, had a long time which was to them a time of delay. What did they do with that time?

I wonder what we do when there seems to be a delay. What do you do? Some people get very restless in a delay of five minutes. They begin to find a scapegoat, somebody to blame. Other people can stand that long a delay, but when hours go by and lengthen into days, and things don't happen that they think ought to happen, then they really get restless.

I have tried to imagine some of the conversations that took place. There were between a million and two million people in that camp. That is a lot of people to have all in one place with the leader gone upon the mountain. They don't know when he is coming back. There is a cloud up there. Lightening is up there occasionally. They understand that God is up there with Moses. But days and weeks have gone by, and not a word has been heard from Moses. What are we going to do? Moses said he was going to take us to Canaan. It doesn't look like we are getting there. We are no nearer than we were yesterday or last week or the week before that. We will never get anywhere on this program.

Was that a real problem? It must have been. I can imagine them coming to Aaron and saying, When is Moses coming back?

Aaron says he doesn't know.

Well, there is the trouble. The man that is in charge doesn't know anything either.

A spirit like that can begin to permeate the camp, and so it did.

I can also imagine that some of the people began to say, We have got to do something for the young people. We have been out of Egypt for quite a while. There used to be a lot going on. It is true we had to work hard down there, but there was always something going on Saturday night. Out here in this desert there is nothing doing at all. Of course, we have had some religious meetings. We had the covenant

and the sacrifices, but that has been some time ago. Moses is gone, and there is nobody to have anything going on that has any life in it. We have got to do something.

There were doubtless many ideas and many discussions. A great deal of conversation. Mark it, while Moses was talking to God the people were talking to one another. And oh, the difference in the results. Moses was listening to God, and the people were listening to one another. Could they have been listening to God? Yes. Not in the same sense that Moses was, but had God given them enough to think about? Just a few weeks before God Himself had spoken to them from the mount. It was an experience such as no other people had ever had, or have ever had since. Certainly He had given them enough to study about and pray over.

Oh, how wonderful it would have been if they had gathered their families and said, We must study those Ten Commandments. We must meditate on them. How wonderful it would have been if the murmuring and restlessness had been stilled by Aaron and by other leaders.

But no, it was allowed to run. And the picture we get is that finally, as a result of the delay, the people came to Aaron and said:

“Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him” Exodus 32:1.

Up. Get busy and do something Aaron. We have got to be doing something. Get up and get busy.

We are told that Aaron was a pliant man, an agreeable man. He disliked controversy. In fact, we are told that he thought Moses was a bit too severe. That is what he thought about his own brother. He thought that if Moses would only be a bit more lenient with the people, and go along with their ideas, that things would be a great deal more peaceable. Now he had his chance. Moses was gone. He was in charge, and he proceeded to carry out his philosophy.

Aaron didn't say, I won't do anything of the kind. Make gods? God told us just a few weeks ago not to make any graven images. Would we think of doing a thing like that? No.

Aaron wasn't that kind of man. He was a meek, mild, agreeable fellow. He had followed that kind of program in his home. He didn't restrain his children. He was too nice, too kind, and too loving to do anything like that. As a result a short time after this his two sons were struck dead by the fire of God because they came into the sanctuary under the influence of wine, and offered strange fire instead of the sacred fire that God had commanded. That was some of the fruit of Aaron's weak administration.

But Aaron was a great favorite. Everybody loved Aaron. Everybody had a good word for him. He wouldn't make enemies, you understand. So they came to him and said, Make us gods.

Aaron thought, What will I do? I am not going to do like Moses. I know pretty well what Moses would do, but I think Moses makes mistakes. I think he is too strict, too severe, too stern with the people. I know what I will do. I don't think they ought to make these gods. But if I tell them that the only way to get these gods is to bring all their gold earrings, they will say that is a bit too expensive, and maybe they had better get along without it. He counted on their pride and selfishness to keep them.

But Aaron had not reckoned with the force of the tide. He was amazed when they came bringing those earrings by the bushels. Golden earrings.

Have you ever worked with people and tried to get them to give up a tiny little ring on a finger? Have you ever seen the struggle that some people go through to give up a little piece of jewelry? I have seen people who had to weep and pray to do it.

But over a million of these people did it in just a few minutes. They were ready. It is amazing what people will do when they want to. They wanted these idols. You may wonder why they would want a senseless idol that couldn't think or speak or do anything. But when you see what happened, you will understand it better. It wasn't just the idol they wanted. They wanted what went with it. They had been down in Egypt long enough to know what happened when people worshipped their gods. There was something doing. Some life.

Aaron had the gold. He had gone too far to turn back. Meek and pliable as Aaron was, once he accepted the idea of the people he became a mighty leader and a mighty general. The people thought so, and Aaron went right to work to give leadership to that work of apostasy. He got in himself and helped make that calf. Then, as they looked at that calf they sang. There was a shout of triumph through the camp, These be thy gods, oh Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Think of it. Giving the glory to that golden calf that they thought had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They all knew it was just a bunch of earrings that had been melted down and molded.

Aaron, pleased with the way things were going, said, Tomorrow let's have a celebration. A feast to Jehovah. Think of it. Did that make it all right? Putting the sacred label on a heathen custom doesn't make it holy. It makes it worse.

There is an experience that took place half-way around the world at a school that was established as a pattern school in Australia. The principal of the school decided it would be a fine thing to have an anniversary celebration. They asked Sister White to speak to the students in the morning at the chapel, and in the afternoon they had what is called a good time. They didn't see anything wrong about it.

"These things are a repetition of the course of Aaron, when at the foot of Sinai he allowed the first beginning of wrong by permitting a spirit of reveling and commonness to come into the camp of Israel. He showed his weakness by not standing firmly against the propositions of the people. He could have exercised his authority to hold the congregation back from wrongdoing; but just as in his home he failed with his children, so he showed the same defective

administration in his management of Israel. His weakness as a general was seen in his desire to please the people, even at the sacrifice of principle. He lost his power of command at the very first permission that he gave which allowed them to go contrary to God's commands in the least particular. And as a result, the spirit of idolatry came in, and the current set in motion could not be stayed until stern and decisive measures had been taken" *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, page 351.

The children of Israel had been living in a land where everybody worshipped the calf. They were used to it. What they were doing was just what they had seen all their lives. They said, After all, you have to have a little relaxation once in a while. And if you do it in the name of Jehovah, then surely it will be all right.

The calf is not the whole thing at all. It is what goes with it—the excitement, the frivolity, the mirth, the gluttony, the eating and drinking, the general high time. The sinning and the dancing, and all that leads to the breaking down of the barriers of self-indulgence. People can get drunk by what they hear as well as by what they eat and drink. All the avenues were being used at Sinai, and all the avenues are being used today. There is many a thing which is called a party, a picnic, which is a repetition of these same things.

Don't misunderstand me. There is true, genuine Christian recreation, but it is as far apart as the poles in the thing we are studying. And there is precious little of the true article.

God's true program of recreation and amusement is just as different from the world as God's true Sabbath is different from the false Sabbath.

As the children of Israel went on with this mirth and frivolity, intoxicated with their eating and drinking and music and dancing, and went into the terrible things of licentious idolatry, Moses was blissfully ignorant of what is going on. God finally said to him, You will have to go down. Those people you have brought out of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have made a calf and are worshipping it just like the Egyptians. They are doing what they saw down in Egypt.

Oh, how bad Moses must have felt. Then God said, I have to destroy these people. They are stiff-necked. They are rebellious. They are wicked. They have made trouble for you already a number of times. They will continue to make trouble if they are allowed to. Moses, let Me alone and I will destroy them. And I will make of you a great nation.

Moses didn't say, That's good for them. Let's clean them out. Let's have a real reform, and let's have people who follow the Spirit of Prophecy and have done with all these worldly compromises.

No, Moses got down and pled for those people. He began to reason with God. He called God's attention to the fact that God had taken those people out of Egypt, and that His name was at stake. Then he called the attention of God to the

promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He said, Lord, you told Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob You would make their descendants like the stars of heaven, and that You would plant them in the land of Canaan. If You don't do it, what will You do with that promise? You have taken these people out of Egypt. What will the heathen say if they are all destroyed?

Oh, how Moses plead with God. Finally God said, All right, Moses. All right. God harkened to a man. God listened to a poor human being, Moses, who loved those people so much that instead of wanting to see them destroyed he wanted to see them saved. So with the assurance God would be with him he came down the mountain. Joined by Joshua, his servant, they came to the camp.

Joshua didn't know what was going on. As they drew near the camp and heard all that noise Joshua said there must be a battle going on. No, Moses said. The noise of them that sing do I hear.

I don't think it was any of the songs of Zion they heard, do you? No, I think it was music that went with the eating and drinking and the idol worship, and the mirth and frivolity. Moses recognized it.

As they came where they could see what was going on, and as they saw that calf and the people dancing around it naked, the anger of Moses arose so high that he took those tables of the law he held in his hands and threw them down and broke them in token of the fact that the children of Israel had broken their covenant with God. He strode into that camp and made his way to that idol. He pulled it off its pedestal and had it ground up into powder. It was destroyed. Then he summoned Aaron. He said, What did these people do to you that you have done this?

“And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot:
thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief”
Exodus 32:22.

Don't get angry. Calm down. Let not the anger of my lord wax hot. They are set on mischief. Aaron laid the blame on the people.

That is the sin of many a leader today. He is looking to the people instead of God. Aaron believed in democracy, but Moses believed in Theocracy. Aaron was listening to hear what the people thought. Moses was listening to hear what God thought. That made the difference in their attitude.

If everybody in the camp of Israel votes to make a golden calf it doesn't make it right. Neither does it make it right for a leader to yield to that sort of pressure. No, it doesn't. So Aaron was soundly whipped verbally. He was rebuked and reprovved, which he should have been, by his younger brother, Moses.

“And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me.

And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him” Exodus 32:25-26.

As the trumpet was blown the whole camp was called to line up. Moses called for action. He didn't leave anybody to be neutral. They must either come on the right side and say they hadn't worshipped the calf or come on the left side and repent and say they wouldn't do it anymore, or else they stayed in the camp and kept on with their revelry.

Then by inspiration Moses issued a command. He told every man who had not worshipped the calf to gird his sword on and go through the camp and kill every man who was still worshipping. That day 3,000 men were slain.

What would you have done had you been there? Which one of those leaders would you have approved? What would have been your attitude?

Many a person would have said, Well, of course, Aaron is wrong in worshipping the golden calf, but Aaron has the right spirit. Moses is right as far as sticking for the law of God and reforms, but why can't he be nicer about it? Why does he have to be so stern and so strict? That state of mind does not understand the character of God, my friends. And the people who will sing the song of Moses on the Sea of Glass will be misunderstood down here in this remnant of time just as Moses was back there in the camp of Israel. There are golden calves being worshipped today as truly as the one that was worshipped back there at the foot of Horeb.

What do we think about it? Have we gotten so used to it that we say everybody is doing these things? God has not told us these things for naught. And when we forsake the Word of God and the testimony of His Spirit, when we do things like the Egyptians did them, sooner or later Moses must come. When he comes some men are not going to understand his spirit. There will always be Aarons who do what the people want. As a result thousands and thousands of Israel will be cut off today as they were back there.

Which spirit are you going to partake of?

After the idolaters were slain the next day Moses said:

“Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin” Exodus 32:30.

We see Moses treading that rocky path to Sinai again. He is going up to try to get forgiveness for Israel. He returned to the Lord and said:

“And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written” Exodus 32:31-32.

This is the same man who destroyed the calf the day before. This is the same man who summoned Aaron to that stiff and stern reprimand. This is the same man who told the Levites to gird their swords on and slay everyone who persisted in idolatry.

Oh friends, who loved the people the most? Who really loved the people? Aaron with his time-serving compromise or Moses? Can you sing the song of Moses? Do you love people enough to die for them. Do you love them enough to tell them the truth, try to help them to give up their wicked ways. In the light of this study we see that love is no cheap sentimentalism, no weak molly-coddling. No yielding on the part of parents to children, teachers to students, church leaders to those who want to bring the world in. That isn't love. It is weakness. True love is in the heart of that man who pleads with God on the mountain, and comes to the camp and gets action, and cleans up those who will be cleaned up. Then he goes back to plead with God to forgive His nation, His church.

When Ezekiel had a view of the last hour, he saw an angel going from home to home in Jerusalem with the instruction from heaven to set a mark on the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. It is a miracle of God to get the sternness of Moses and the love of Moses all into one heart at the same time. There are some people who would like to copy his sternness, and all they succeed in doing is making fools of themselves. There are others who try to copy his meekness and love, and many times all they succeed is making good imitations of Aaron.

We are told that love and kindness are worth nothing without the discipline that God has said should be maintained. There is one thing I long for and pray for. It is to get these two things together—a great love for righteousness and a great hatred of iniquity; the spirit to exalt the standard and the spirit to give up our lives rather than to see others lost.

When that spirit has gripped our hearts, we shall be ready for the finishing of the work and ready to sing the song of Moses on the Sea of Glass.

Jesus too loved righteousness and exalted His Father's love. Jesus too taught and followed and practiced strict obedience. Jesus, like Moses, offered His life, and He gave His life. God could not accept the sacrifice of Moses as an atonement for anybody else. But God could, and did, accept the sacrifice of His Son as the atonement for the sins of His people. But just as Moses made the offer, so Jesus has given His life, not that we might linger on in compromise and worldliness, but that He might be able to present to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee tonight that all these things happened unto them for ensamples, that they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. And as the spirit of worldliness and conformity invades and permeates, Oh, grant that we will have the spirit of Moses to resist it rather than the spirit of Aaron to compromise with it.

Teach us not only to love righteousness, but to hate iniquity. With it give us that deep love for Thy church that we would rather be blotted out ourselves than see Israel lost. Give us the spirit of the tender Shepherd that our own lives may be lost sight of in our burden for the lives of others.

Oh, my Lord, only Thou can give us this spirit. We pray for it tonight. Help us to see Jesus, the great Savior, the great Leader, giving His life that men might be saved from sin; giving His life that His church might be washed white and clean.

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