

The song of Moses

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] Turn with me now to the book of Revelation, chapter 15, at verse 3.

Revelation chapter 15, at verse 3. 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. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before thee. For thy judgments are made manifest. This is the last of a number of songs which are interspersed with the narrative of the book of Revelation. Taken together, these songs express heavenly praise to God for his holiness, his creative, redemptive, and judicial acts.

[1 : 32] The distinctive point about this song, one of them at any rate, is that the name of Moses is introduced in the title.

And when we read this title, the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, it is one song, one theme, but two songs mentioned in the title.

When we read this, we are reminded that the theme of this final song takes into account the whole course of the history of God's pilgrim church, from the time of the exodus, from the time of the exodus, to the time of the final song of triumph.

And what I wish to do this evening for a little is to draw your attention to a few points of contrast between the song of the exodus, between the song of the exodus, and the song of the Lamb.

And then, to one point of comparison. First then, let us look at some points of contrast between these two songs.

[3 : 06] Considering, first of all, the localities in which the songs are sung. The localities have this in common, that both songs were sung beside the sea.

You will notice that it is said in our version that the group who sang were standing on the sea. But the same preposition that is translated there had at the time when the New Testament was written another meaning which seems to fit the context better, by the sea.

Both songs then are sung by our sea. But there is a historical sea, and a symbolical sea.

And these we wish to contrast. The historical sea was, of course, the Red Sea.

[4 : 15] And by an eastern shore of that sea, Moses and the Israelites sang their song. The day before the song was sung, by the shore of the Red Sea, that sea had appeared to the Israelites as an impassable barrier between them and escape from slavery or destruction.

But on the morning when they sang the song, the whole company of Israel, without a man missing, without any person missing, were on the opposite shore.

The previous day, the Pharaoh and the pig detachment of his charioteers were close behind them. And in front of them, an expanse of deep water with no bridge and no boats to help them.

But the morning on which they sang the song, they saw the dead bodies of their enemies being washed up by the waves. And they themselves were a free people.

[5 : 44] And in the tremendous act of deliverance which God gave them when he brought them safely through these divided waters, the Holy Spirit enabled them to see as never before the power, the mercy, and the faithfulness of the God of their fathers and their own God.

And the same spirit moved them to respond to that fresh revelation of the greatness of their God. In the noble song which we read in Exodus, a song expressing gratitude for present deliverance, and expressing confidence in God for future leading until they came to the promised land.

But it may appear that the time of the Exodus is far separated from the time of the song which we have referred to in Revelation.

Yet someone has said that the Exodus is forever. For the deliverance of God at the Red Sea given to Israel at the Red Sea is a pattern of many a succeeding deliverance that God in a variety of circumstances has given to his people down through the ages.

Take for example the circumstances of Judah and the days of Hezekiah when the armies of Sennacherib the aggressor in western Asia of that day came right up to the city after servants of the king Sennacherib had tried to break down the morale of Judah by impressing them with the fact that no people in the way of his route had been able to resist him that no God of other people had been able to defend them against him.

[7 : 57] The case seemed hopeless for little Judah but they cried to God and we have in Psalm 76 a reference to the victory that he gave them.

It is also expressed in well-known words of one of the English poets who says of the army of Sennacherib like the leaves of the forest when summer is green that host with their banners at evening were seen like the leaves of the forest when autumn is blown that host on the morrow lay withered and strown for the angel of death spread his wings with a blast and breathed in the face of the foe when he passed.

But apart from that there have been many circumstances in persecution in the experiences of the souls of men where there was a deliverance given after the pattern of God's deliverance at the Red Sea.

For you see it was God himself who led the Israelites into that apparently hopeless situation in which they were placed it was by God's guidance through Moses that they turned and got themselves into that position not knowing then what it would mean when Pharaoh overtook them. and God as we find in scripture often leads men and women into difficult and troublous and desperate situations for their own good.

[9 : 33] It may be in personal affliction it may be in times of persecution it may be when the soul is in quest of deliverance from the power of sin and the penalty of sin.

People are brought into such a situation as that they see that unless God himself intermeans there is no help or hope for them and then when they cry to God in his good time he sends deliverance. As the psalm one of the psalmists expresses it when the men sent their cry to God in a desperate situation into which they had brought themselves and God had permitted them to go because of their own sin he out of darkness did them bring and from death shade them take the bands whereby they had been born as sunder quite he break.

Why? So that they might recognize very clearly that it was only by God's sovereign and merciful deliverance that they were rescued and might be moved to thank them for the deliverance given. But now let us turn and look at the other is sung by the sea. We have the symbolical sea. I saw says the writer says John as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire.

[10 : 59] Now this sea is part of the imagery of John's vision of heaven and we have earlier reference to it in chapter 4 where the sea is seen before the throne of God and close to it the seven flaming lamps representing the seven spirits of God or the sevenfold spirit of God.

But here the sea is described as a sea flushed with fire and the people who are singing by it are described as those who have got victory.

Victory over the beast and over his image and his mark and so on. Here is a group of representative people of God who would be involved in the final conflict between God and the devil and his agencies and who are represented here as having been rescued from all the affliction and the peril to which they were exposed.

But just as the Red Sea was a scene of the wrath of God against the enemies of the people of God as well as a rescue place of the people of God from their enemies.

So here the fiery state of the sea as it appeared to John may represent the wrath of God destroying their enemies as well as the tribulation out of which his people have been rescued.

[12 : 30] And we are told that by this sea of glass they sang having harps of God. That means the harps were given them by God.

They were moved by the Spirit of God to respond with thanksgiving for their great deliverance from the conflict in which their life and their hope for eternity was threatened.

and so we have two groups singers by a sea each one a singer by singing by a sea and they are singing in thanksgiving and we are reminded surely that if there is singing on earth stirred up by the Spirit of God in thanksgiving and singing in heaven moved by the same Spirit and sustained by the

same Spirit we ought to be thankful to God through Christ for every deliverance which he gives us whether out of illness or from accident or spiritual deliverance from distress or despondency or temptation or despair or what have you we ought to seek that a spirit of thankfulness would be stirred up in our hearts to God through Christ as the great deliverer upon whom we must continually depend and upon whom we must depend above all things to deliver us out of the perils that stand between us and our reaching in safety the city of God but then let us pass on and notice the victories that are celebrated the victories that are celebrated and they are distinguished as an initial and a final victory the initial victory is the victory by the historic sea historical sea it was to Israel a hope kindling victory a hope kindling triumph and deliverance and they expressed their confidence that God would lead them safely to the promised land immediately afterwards in succession they enjoyed great privileges at the hand of their God he provided them in the wilderness with manna and with water from the smitten rock at Sinai he made a covenant with them they were given victory over the

Amalekite enemies and so on but their faith failed with many of them God was not well pleased and the appalling thing is that only two of the adult generation reached the land they were so confident in reaching and that is not something that belongs only to ancient Israel the New Testament tells us of that history of Israel that part of Israel's history that it is written for our learning the Old Testament takes it up for the exhortation and learning of a psalmist's generation and later day the apostle Paul takes it up in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 the epistle to the Hebrews takes it up the epistle of Jude takes it up to warn believers that they must stand in the evil day that they must be prepared by the grace of God to recognize temptation and danger and in the strength of

God to stand against it and overcome and remain loyal to God some may say but what of the perseverance of the saints well remember this friend that the perseverance of the saints under the power and guidance of the good spirit is promoted by the warnings of God's word by its encouragements and promises the Holy Spirit stirring up the people of God to take warning from the things that are described in the word as perils in their way as perils which they encounter is part of the way that the Holy Spirit ensures the perseverance of God's work in the souls of men and that is why we have such strong warnings based on this very happening to the children of

[17 : 35] Israel Paul is at great pains to draw close parallel between the Israelites and the people at Corinth beset by a heathen environment and many moral perils and spiritual perils he goes into great detail about the ways that Israel tempted God and were at length a majority of them abandoned by God and then he says this to the Corinthian Christians wherefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall think friend of the confidence of Simon Peter on the night when the Lord's Supper was instituted think of the boasting that he made that whoever of the apostles deserted Christ he would never desert and think what happened before the next morning dawned and the day was far advanced let him that think he stands take heed lest he fall but when we look at the other victory celebration it is a final song for observe the position of this song in the chapter

John says I saw another shine in heaven great and marvelous seven angels having the seven last plagues for in them is filled up the wrath of God and we expect him to go on and tell us about the seven plagues and how the vials were poured out upon the earth but he doesn't do that he sets a song in between and then he goes on at the end of this chapter and in the next chapter to tell us of the experience upon earth of these plagues leading up to the final judgment so that in the song we have actually the anticipation of the singers of the final victory the final victory to which they will be brought the song anticipates that and they know that it is the final song their enemies are forever conquered nothing more will hurt them they are beyond the effects of sins curse beyond sin and sorrow and separation and all that is hindering to their spiritual and personal welfare they are forever safe and so they have come through the last terrible conflict safely by the grace and power of God and there is I think probably a connection here between the first vision of the sea and what has been celebrated in the psalm for the first vision of the sea in chapter four brings out that in a close association with it there are seen the seven spirits of God or the sevenfold spirit of God the power of the spirit of God available to meet every believer's need the total need of the whole church and to bring every true believer in

Christ safely through to the promised land to the eternal city never forget friend that the resources of the spirit of Christ directed by Christ to the supplying of his people are never to be exhausted there is enough to spare for each and all and for all manner of circumstances give God the glory of believing it and in your hour of trouble believe that he is willing and able to meet your need in his

good time and in his good way and by the communication of his spirit's help that is best suited to your need the next point I want to look at by way of contrast is the leaders mentioned in the old testament we have the historic deliverance and the historic song and Moses was the leader now Moses is described here as Moses the servant of God every believer in

Christ ought to be a servant of God and is by God's choice a servant of God we are saved to serve but Moses was in a conspicuous degree a servant of God he was chosen by God and equipped by God for a post of great responsibility and there is one significant thing about Moses and it is this that there is no person in scripture more frequently described as a servant of God than Moses Israel owed to Moses an incalculable debt through Moses there was communicated to them the law that for centuries molded their religious their moral and their social life in all their difficulties

Moses was their devoted intercessor and in many instances by the grace of God he was successful on one occasion when God was threatening to destroy the people Moses went the length of offering himself to God if it would be any help towards God giving deliverance to Israel but of course it could be no help for how could Moses a sinful man himself be a substitute for his people Moses was the one who prophesied that a prophet with the Lord his God raised up to his people like to him a prophecy which the New Testament recognizes as fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ but there were limits to the extent of Moses intercession for God limited the times that he was prepared to pardon Israel and Moses himself moved to hasty speech by his irritation on one occasion was excluded from the land of

[24 : 00] Canaan so he wasn't excluded from heaven but when we turn to the singers by the sea of glass their leader is the lamb that is a title of Christ that is mentioned more than 25 times nearer 30 times according to the text read in the book of revelation this leader of the people was measurelessly greater than the great Moses greater in his person greater in the revelation that he brought to men for he was himself the revelation of God in his person in his teaching in his work and by his spirit outpoured upon the church he brought into being the new testament telling of his career and its significance and expounding it in its application to the needs of men so as to be a sufficient guide to them to the end of time and

Christ is the intercessor who is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them him km between the two Testaments that a leader should be symbolized by an animal we read in Revelation and in various parts of Christ as a leader under the title of a lamb he shall feed them and lead them to fountains of living water and so on when those interested in mountaineering go to Central Europe intending to climb the Alps without previous training if they are wise they are concerned to hire a good guide an experienced guide a guide with a good record of bringing people safely up and safely down there was one such guide out with a company of people who had no experience of climbing one day he warned them at the outset that there was one essential and that is that they must not on any account disobey any command he gave them they must give them explicit obedience and then they could be assured that he would bring them safely to the peak they intended to ascend and safely back when they had ascended a certain distance he halted the company and said to them that a little way ahead of them there was a deep fissure or a deep crack right across the mountainside but that there was one point to which he would lead them whether to be possible for them safely to jump across and that they need not fear for he would go across before them and catch each person as he or she landed they arrived at the place the whole party got across as directed with one exception one gentleman left to the end probably by his own design looked across and looked down into the dark depths and said I don't think I can manage it the guide said I'll be sure to catch you he hesitated and then the guide held out his hand and he said sir that is a hand that never lost a man

Moses through no fault of his own lost thousands of Israelites in the wilderness but Jesus Christ never lost a man or woman entrusted to his care my sheep he said hear my voice and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hand the last thing we notice is the point of comparison it is the same God and for very much the same reasons who was praised in the song by the Red Sea and who will be praised in glory by his redeemed people now we see that God is praised as the almighty helper of his people we see it in the song here great and marvelous are thy works Lord God Almighty it is said that he alone is holy now the word that is translated holy in this passage is not the usual word for God's holiness it is a word that has emphasis upon the idea of being faithful to oneself faithful to one's character and it brings out the point of a faithful covenant God

God in his condescension entered into covenant with his people in ancient days and enters with into covenant with his people through the gospel now and he acts in terms of that covenant he has bound himself and all the honor of his name he has bounded up with his fulfilling his promises to his people and so that is the sense in which I think it is said that thou only art holy in the song he is described as the everlasting king and it is said that he would be universally acknowledged or is universally acknowledged for the un- are anticipating the end now of course the context shows that before the end there would become a great conflict between God and the enemies of his people in which the enemies of his people spiritual or human would be utterly overthrown so that by the time this song is represented as being sung there are two divisions made between mankind that will endure for eternity and since all of us will be involved in what is portrayed here or symbolized here at the end of time our great concern should be that we will be in the right group all mankind at the end will have to acknowledge the authority the righteousness the faithfulness of God God will be vindicated in all his ways but some will be brought many will be brought to acknowledge that by compulsion events will turn out so that they cannot but acknowledge it but it will not benefit them for the acknowledgement will come too late others because they have found grace and mercy in the days of their earthly pilgrimage will be ready to acknowledge it willingly and thankfully now we began by singing part or we sang before we began the service sermon sang part of Psalm 66 that psalm has the same theme put in somewhat different language as the song in Revelation it begins by calling upon all nations to acknowledge God it goes on to show what he did for Israel by the Dead Sea by the Red Sea and what he does for his people in subsequent generations when he leads them into difficult positions and tries them he brings them says the psalmist through fire and water yet in the end he leads them to a wealthy place but having said that we find that the psalmist goes on to speak of himself and he says this all that fear God come here

[32 : 29] I'll tell what he did for my soul it is a great thing to know that the cause of righteousness will triumph that all God's people will win home to safety and to everlasting blessedness but if we are not to be among them it will not help us any our supreme duty if we are not of God's people now is to seek mercy to get right with God here and now the psalmist says in a later psalm let my soul live and it will praise thee it is the soul that is brought to spiritual life by the Holy Spirit that responds to God's deliverance with true praise praise which will go on in varied notes and with varied intensity throughout the earthly pilgrimage until at last it blends in the triumph song of the saints seek then friend that your lips may be opened to praise God not only for temporal deliverances but for the great deliverance by which God brings men and women out of the domain of darkness and translates them into the kingdom of his dear son let us pray ever blessed God the Redeemer of men grant unto us not only to know thee as our God and creator and provider that as the God of redemption the God who in his great mercy has delivered us from the distress sin has brought upon us has taken us from the fearful pit and the miry clay and set our feet upon a rock and set a new song in our lips teach us O Lord to begin to praise thee here and to praise thee continually to show forth thy praises not only by word of mouth but by homage of heart and service of life take us into thy care and keeping take us each one in safety to our respective homes this night bless us and make us a blessing there and as we may go forth to our work in the morning we pray that thou wouldst accompany us throughout the remaining days of our earthly pilgrimage do thou grant that goodness and mercy may follow us until in the multitude of thy mercies and the abundance of thy grace we come to the Father's house in peace to go out no more and to thee Father, Son and Spirit be ascribed the praise and glory world without end

Amen