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"The Song of Moses - and the Lamb"

by T. Austin-Sparks

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The fragment of the word of the Lord which is basic to our meditation is in the Rev. 15:3-4: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty, righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest."

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." And what is that two-fold song, or that one song which gathers up this marvellous Old Testament and this glorious New Testament theme? It is the song of a great emancipation; the song of a great deliverance; the song of a great gathering out accomplished; the song of a freeing by the almighty power of God. "The song of Moses the servant of God" (we will look at it in a minute) "And the song of the Lamb" - one song! But it is the song of an exodus, a going out, a deliverance, a freeing, an emancipation by a specific method, and that is why it is called not the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of Jesus the Son of God, but it is the "Song of the *Lamb*." That is its supreme significance, because in both instances, in the typical and in the literal, the Lamb slain was the way out, and the way through; the basis for everything. It is the song of the Lamb. A way, a peculiar way, a specific way. That, beloved, is why we gathered round the ninth chapter of the gospel of Luke this evening - the account or record of what is called the transfiguration of the Son of Man - because it was in that transfiguration mount that Moses the servant of God, accompanied by Elijah, appeared with the Lamb in the glory, and spake not of His death (that is not the word in the original, though so

translated in one of our versions), but concerning the exodus which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem - a mighty accomplishment in an exodus through a grave, through death. There was never another death in all the history of death like that; never another grave in all the history of graves like that grave. The death and the grave by which this infinite deliverance, or exodus was accomplished, "And they spake with Him concerning the exodus that He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." It was an hour of the triumph of faith.

Now mark every word, "An hour of the triumph of faith." And if you had understood - been able to enter into - the deepest meaning and secret and experience of the transfiguration mount you would have found that it was the scene of a grim conflict; not less grim than Gethsemane, and through the conflict - the triumph of faith. Wherein did the conflict lay? Why, He was already glorified, why then go through the Cross? Why not now pass with the glory into the glory? Why not go right through into glory now? We have before mentioned that many authorities think that in that passage with which we are familiar the translation ought to be this - "Who *instead* of the joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame" - "Who *instead* of the glory...." Whether you accept that, or not, the principle is there. That was the battleground, for here was the glory, here was the joy of the glory set before Him, the open door into heaven. They appeared with Him in glory. There it is, and if He had sought His own, claimed His own, and stood alone for His own, and had let go this other work relative to all these unsaved souls, He could have gone right through into the glory. It was His by right. He was the Prince of glory. The battle then was - Shall I go through to the glory, or shall I go the other way? Shall I go this way, or that way? And there appeared unto Him Moses and Elijah and spake with Him concerning the exodus. I wonder what they were saying.

Moses I am quite sure was encouraging and saying - "Don't forget long, long ago that people came out through the Red Sea." That was the way of their deliverance. And Elijah was saying - "Don't forget there was a day when I stemmed the waters of Jordan, they parted and made a way for me, and I went through by a chariot into the glory." That is the way. They spake of the method of His exodus which He was about to accomplish. And faith triumphed, and He came down from the mountain, and did not go through to the glory. He waited a bit, in order to take us with Him, "Who, by the grace of God, should bring many sons to the glory," instead of going alone. That is the way through. That is the achievement of Calvary. That is the accomplishment at Jerusalem, and that is the basis and theme, key-note and harmony of the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb - exodus through the grave. O, but what a grave! That is the point.

It is not an ordinary grave, and it is just exactly what that grave stood for which gives the key, the interpretation to this whole theme. That grave as symbolised in the exodus of the people of God of old. Israel from Egypt went through the grave of the Red Sea, and it *was* a grave as it proved to be very literally, as we shall see in a moment. Their exodus through that grave was typical, and symbolic of the destroying of the whole tyranny and domination of sin. That is the first note in the heavenly chorus. Sin dealt with in that grave. Sin in its root principle; but I am not going to trouble you to turn again to such familiar words as in Romans 6 - "Having been buried with Him," "planted together in the likeness of His death," "sin shall no longer have the dominion over you." Well that is there, and, in order that He might save His people from their sin, and vindicate His title, His Name, He will make His exodus by way of the Cross, the grave.

Now that is the first, simple elementary truth of the gospel for any sinner. That is where you begin, beloved. Have you visions and imaginations of singing the song in the glory? You say, you hope to be there, you want to be there. Now begin here. Do you know the cancellation and blotting out of sin as

by a death that puts sin deep, deep in the abyss of a grave like the grave through which He passed? Never a grave like that! It was a grave that went right down to Hades; a grave that ploughed its way down to the deepest depths where sin dwells, and deals with sin at rock-bottom. But a grave like that must stand between your old life and your life in Christ if you are to know anything of singing "the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb." You begin there, pardon me beloved saints for being so elementary, but one has to start there, and you know we have not got out of the realm of preaching the gospel yet. May the Lord deliver us from ever having this laid to our charge - that we have no gospel for the unsaved. Now that is the gospel pure and simple at its beginning, but that is not all of the gospel - you begin there.

"The song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb" is the song of an emancipation from the dominion of sin. Mark you, I am not saying from the presence of sin, but from the dominion of sin. You have got to learn to have dominion, if you are going to share thrones and reign, and it is the exercise of your spirit in the power of reigning life that is your training to have dominion in the spirit. That is why the Master never wiped the Devil out in the Cross; He dealt with him but never wiped him out, but gave him a certain lease of life in order to give us a chance of sharing His triumph and His throne, in order that there might be a counterpart in the church of His own treading upon the head of the serpent, that He might say to us - in the language of Thomas Goodwin - as to His church - "Come, my beloved, I have put my heel on his head, come you and put your foot where I have placed mine," and so the apostle realizes that He shall say unto us also, the church, 'put your feet upon him' - "God shall bruise satan under *your* heel shortly." Then Calvary's bruising must have this counterpart, and so He has not eradicated sin root and branch from us; but He has delivered our spirit from the bondage, and put our spirit, by grace, in a place of ascendancy, so that it is for us, by the energising of God in our spirit to have the dominion. It is that the victorious Christ, victorious over sin, dwelling in our spirit may work out His own triumph in us as He wrought it in the Cross.

Do not misunderstand me. That is a point upon which there is a good deal of misunderstanding, but there it is - dominion from that tyranny of Egypt. As you who are familiar with the word of the Lord here know, Egypt throughout the Old Testament is always a type of the senses of the natural man, and out from the tyranny of those senses which are all polluted by sin He has delivered us by His Cross, and we live no longer after the senses, we live after the Spirit. It was also an exodus by which life's barren waste and ineffectiveness might be put away, and that we might come out into our true vocation. You see these people in Egypt were working very hard, but to what purpose? They were spending their strength, exhausting their resources but all in the interests of the enemy, and they groaned, we read, by reason of their taskmasters, and, in order that they should not have the opportunity of contemplating the exodus their labours were increased. That is the way of the enemy, no clearly defined purpose being accomplished, no work accomplishing the eternal ends of God. Beloved, you don't know, and you never can know why you were created until you are a sharer in the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ in and by His Cross, and then you begin to discover in your spirit a sense of purpose. You notice that one of the first gestures of a newly-born life is to do something for the Lord, the first inclination, the first working out arises out of this sense - that this birth is unto something, and although many mistakes are made in that early infant consciousness of the newly-born spirit, nevertheless, there is this thing, a sense of purpose, of vocation, of definite calling as of something to be done.

Sooner or later there comes, through a revelation in the main, of our relationship to the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ before the world was, and then, under the anointing of the

Holy Spirit, we begin to discover the nature of our place in that purpose, and we begin to realise the endowment and equipment to fulfil that for which, as we now realise, we were eternally elected in Christ. The whole matter of vocation as related to some intention of God settled before the foundation of the world comes up now, and life becomes dominated by a sense of the eternal purpose. And they came out through the Red Sea into the purpose of God to be the instrument and channel, sphere and vehicle of His own revelation.

Now, I am still speaking perhaps to many who have not yet been identified with the Lord in that death and that burial - so many who are wondering why they are alive, some even complaining because they had no choice in the matter - an injustice has been done them - they would rather not have come. But oh, how far that is from this, that we are called into His eternal purpose in Christ to fit into a plan conceived in the heart of God before the first man was created! To you who are "called according to His purpose" - "chosen in Him". Wonderful conception! But, mark you, you never put your foot upon that territory until you know the power of His death, the depths of His grave over all that which can never come into the service of God, for our "old man," our flesh, can never serve God. We, beloved, in our natural spirit can never be of any use to God. I would that all who profess to be the Lord's would settle that once and for all. Our flesh can contribute nothing to the purpose of God, not a fragment. There is nothing in us by nature which God will take and use. Now settle it, for you will have to come to it sooner or later, if you are going on with God. The service of God is service in the spirit on the ground of His own working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, because He is resident in us, and He is only resident in His own begotten-again children. Are you clear about that? You only make a mess when you try to do God's work for Him.

The matter then of spiritual ascendancy over sin is a matter of resurrection with Christ from the dead by having shared with Him His cross and His grave. The matter of spiritual service is in the same relationship by the same way. And then, blessed be God, in that grave death's sting was plucked out. He went through the grave, and as He went through He plucked the sting of death from death. It was the death of death that He died so that death is robbed of its sting and of its prey in the grave of the Lord Jesus. It was a terrific death! A mighty death! You see that in the symbolism in Israel's case. We have so often pointed this out, just let us say it briefly again. The battle of the Paschal Lamb and the exodus was the battle between the Lord of Life and the Lord of Death. The blood was the basis of that tremendous thing, and the Lord of Death coming to Egypt met the Lord of Life in the presence of the blood poured forth and encircling the portal of the threshold of the house of His people, and that blood resisted the Lord of Death. He had no access, for that blood was the occasion of the access of the Lord of Life into the house of His chosen. The position was not 'pass by', it was 'pass over' the threshold, right in. He stepped across the blood at the threshold, and made a covenant of Life on the ground of that blood with those within, who, by faith, had taken the blood.

They may well have said, "Well, this is a very silly sort of thing to do, we don't see much in this - sprinkling the blood on the lintel of the doorposts! What is the effect of this?" Oh, by faith they sprinkled the blood, and it was the triumph of faith in the blood which brought about a covenant of Life with the Lord of Life, so that the Lord of Death was excluded and vanquished, and all that was accomplished in the blood, and secured a safe exodus from the grave which would have swallowed them up, but for that blood and that covenant, and that victorious faith! That is why the writer of the Hebrew letter speaking in solemn language, refers to those who "trampled under foot the blood of the covenant and accounted it an unholy thing." There it is in the symbolism of Egypt, of Israel. The basis of a covenant of life by which death, and the Lord of Death, is robbed of authority, of power, of

right of access, and a way out from death into life is made in union with the victorious Lord of Life through the blood, and so they sing their song. It was the song of life in prospect. The song of Moses the servant of God was just that song which we shall sing one day, "O death where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory." "Then shall be brought to pass that which is written." That is the song of the Lamb, the prophecy of the song of Moses the servant of God. Death swallowed up in victory through the blood of the Lord Jesus. Beloved, don't confine that to physical death, if that is what is horizoned in your minds by what I have said. Death is an infinitely bigger thing than that, and life is infinitely bigger than salvation from physical dissolution.

Then you notice this other note, perhaps the note which was most in the ascendent in the song of Moses the servant of God, "the horse and his rider have been cast into the depths of the sea" -

*"I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and song,
And He is become my salvation.
This is my God, I will praise Him;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him.
The Lord is a man of war:
The Lord is His name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea:
And His chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.
The deeps cover them:
They went down into the depths like stone.
Thy right hand, O Lord is glorious in power." etc.*

The ascendent note of the song is, not only are the instruments of the enemy destroyed, but the enemy himself is destroyed. He has used sin; he has used bondage; he has used tyranny; he has used death, and they, with himself are now swallowed up. The enemy is wiped out, and that is the song of the Lamb as it was the song of Moses the servant of God.

Now, what I like about it is this: that it is corporate. "Then sang Moses *and the children of Israel.*" Moses did not sing a solo, there was a chorus, and when you come over to the Revelation, it is not the Lamb singing His song of triumph, it is the redeemed who are with Him singing the song of the Lamb, the one song of Moses and of the Lamb, which has one basis - absolute deliverance from every form of tyranny, bondage and ineffectiveness through the grave.

Now beloved, that might be very good in prospect, but that is not good enough. David sang: "He hath put a new song into my mouth," and unless we are able to sing this song now, we had better abandon hope of singing it then, because Calvary in all its meaning is now effective, and all its fruit is now available, and the whole of the word of God brings its emphasis to bear upon this, that the full meaning of the Cross of the Lord Jesus is to be the present experience of His own. In other and familiar words - the secret of victory and the song of victory is knowing our union with Him in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection. Oh, you have heard that, I know, thousands of times! It does not matter, do you know it? Do you really know it? Can you sing now the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. To begin with, can you sing by reason of a spiritual emancipation from the tyranny and dominion of sin? I do not mean that you never fail, that you never break down, but have you got in your possession the secret of spiritual ascendancy?

Shall I put it another way? Do you know what it is to have a new life indwelling you which rises up and gives you the enablement, even if you do fail, to get up and go on, instead of succumbing to the tyranny and dominion of sin? Do you know what it is to have that continuous uprising of resurrection life that makes you say, "Though I fail, yet will I rise." Not that your life should be one continual succession of falling and rising, being floored and getting up and going on again, but that you are progressively and certainly going on in ascension life, and gaining the ascendancy in your spirit over your flesh. That is the course, that this "old man" from day to day is being brought into the captivity and control of that "new man" which is in us. This outer man of the soul, with the sinful principle in him, is being reduced to the authority and power and dominion of that "new man" with the Spirit of holiness as His principle. That is the course of spiritual experience. There is a progressive and continuous rising and taking ascendancy on the part of the inner man, renewed in God by the energising of the Holy Spirit over the outer man, the "old man". Do you know the dominion of Christ in your spirit, or are you just where you were twelve months ago, or more? Is the law of sin being broken by the law of Christ's resurrection life in your spirit that you do not abide in the bondage of sin? I do not know why the Lord is keeping us back at the beginnings. Perhaps the foundation has got to be renewed and in many cases laid, even in cases who know all about this as a truth. Now, beloved, is this true in your experience? That is the thing that is in my heart. Oh, the danger of being familiar with teaching of this kind, and yet not to be abreast of it in experience! Unless you are learning progressively to sing of victory over sin here, there is no hope of your singing that song there.

Are you afraid of death, to start with? Are you afraid of physical death? Oh, I ask that question deliberately, for I know something in a way, on this matter. There are people who have for many years been preaching Romans 6, and have been considered authorities on the subject of the Cross of Christ, who dread death as they dread nothing else. Now, beloved, what about it, that form? But that is nothing compared with what death really is. Do you know victory in your spirit already over death in all its forms, that death over you is swallowed up in victory? Of course I know that it requires test cases and test experiences to prove this in many instances, and it is not until you really come up against it that you discover what peace there is, how wonderful is the truth of this thing. Some of us have proved that in recent months, that whereas in years gone by there was an apprehensiveness, we have discovered in the time when the earth, and things of earth were slipping away, a marvellous peace. The thing was proved up to the hilt. I know it wants test cases, but here we begin to interrogate our hearts. Are we sure that the bitterness of death is passed for us in our spirit, not in our emotions and imagination, but really that we have passed already from death into life? For us there is no such thing as death. Now in as much as the test case may be necessary, to prove the reality, beloved, you must lay the foundation of it by your identification with His death, the death that swallows up death. Victory over death in all its forms. Well, there is the sure ground of it.

I must stop, but this song must begin now: you must know it in your heart now. "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb," which is the song arising out of our vital union with Him in that death of deaths, in that grave of graves, and in that resurrection into a Life indestructible, beyond the reach and power of death. A life so full of purpose and meaning and effectiveness that it is a life of the Lord's own living, and the Lord's own working. May the song of the Lord begin in you. May you begin to sing the new song.

*He took me from a fearful pit,
And from the miry clay,*

*And on a rock He set my feet,
Establishing my way.*

*He put a new song in my mouth,
Our God to magnify;
Many shall see it, and shall fear,
And on the Lord rely.*

That is the fruitfulness of it all.

May the Lord make you good singers in this choir of the redeemed by a deep experience.

But there is another side to the theme which need only be mentioned in closing. The song is peculiarly the song of the Lamb as the praiseful expression of the issue of His passion. There was an hour when He passed through a total eclipse. Friends and followers were cut off in trust and help. His work appeared to have been all in vain, there was no evidence of it having been of permanent value. Enemies compassed Him about like bees. His physical strength broke down and gave out when He fell beneath His load. Much more, but as the crowning agony, He lost for a time His Father and His God. The Divine countenance was hidden and in that awful moment all His spiritual exercises were of no avail. While He did not break down in His faith, it was a grim faith which had nothing in the realm of the senses to help it. But He got through. It could not be otherwise. And on the other side He saw all the meaning and had an adequate, answer to the far-reaching "Why?" Hence He is the author of this song.

Beloved, you and I may be called into "the fellowship of His sufferings," and at the time there may be almost total eclipse. If we have truly been united with Him in the likeness of His death we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection and this must surely mean that out of the sob a song, out of the mystery a full vindication, out of the death - life, but most of all and inclusive of all, the revelation that the whole Body of Christ has in some way been benefited and enriched: a ministry which could only be fulfilled this way, to say nothing of the impact of it all beyond our sense or sight upon the prince of Darkness.

Let us hold on to that day which will compel us to say, "Right was the pathway leading to this."