

THE NATION OF MOSES

Exodus 32:1-14 *"Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, 'Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And Aaron said to them, 'Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.' So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!' So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow is a feast to Jehovah.' Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. And Jehovah said to Moses, 'Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"' And Jehovah said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.' Then Moses pleaded with Jehovah his God, and said: 'Jehovah, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, "He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth"? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever." So Jehovah relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."*

I. "THAT MY WRATH MAY BURN HOT AGAINST THEM"

- A. **Exodus 32:10_a** *"Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them."*

God was ready to wipe out a people He had just finished delivering from oppression because they swiftly departed from His service. Saved people can be lost.

- B. **Jude 5** *"I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe."*

On more than one occasion, He destroyed those Israelites whom He had previously saved.

- C. **2nd Peter 3:17** *"You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."*

Steadfastness is a condition from which one may very realistically fall.

- D. **James 5:19-20** *"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."*

People who turn back after wandering from the truth are saved from death!

II. "I WILL MAKE OF YOU A GREAT NATION"

- A. **Exodus 32:10_b** *"I will make of you a great nation."*

God offered to make a nation of Moses. He was in no way beholden to any Israelite.

- B. **Genesis 12:1-3** *"Now Jehovah had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and*

you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

21:12 *“In Isaac your seed shall be called.”*

35:10-11 *“And God said to him, ‘Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.’ So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: ‘I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.’”*

What God promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob could just as easily be fulfilled through one Israelite, Moses, as it could be through any other.

- C. **Matthew 3:9** *“Do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”*

God did not need those people.

III. “MOSES PLEADED WITH JEHOVAH”

- A. **Exodus 32:11** *“Moses pleaded with Jehovah his God, and said: ‘Jehovah, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?’”*

Moses implicitly declined God’s offer.

- B. **Psalms 106:23** *“Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them.”*

Had he not stood in the breach, the rest of the nation would have perished!

- C. **Numbers 12:3** *“The man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.”*

Moses was the meekest man to live before Christ. This humility enabled him to sacrifice a glorious opportunity in order to spare his countrymen.

- D. **Isaiah 53:12** *"He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

As an intercessor, Moses points to the great intercessor, Jesus the Savior.

- E. **1st Timothy 2:1** *"I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men."*

We need the heart of Moses in our prayers, interceding for transgressors, praying not for them to receive justice, but, like Jesus from the cross and Stephen as he was stoned, begging God to forgive the wicked.

IV. **"REMEMBER AND DO NOT FORGET HOW YOU PROVOKED JEHOVAH"**

- A. **Deuteronomy 9:7-14** *"Remember! Do not forget how you provoked Jehovah your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against Jehovah. Also in Horeb you provoked Jehovah to wrath, so that Jehovah was angry enough with you to have destroyed you. When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which Jehovah made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. Then Jehovah delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words which Jehovah had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that Jehovah gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. Then Jehovah said to me, 'Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image.' Furthermore Jehovah spoke to me, saying, 'I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'"*

Years later, the people of Israel were reminded, explicitly, of what they had done wrong and how close they came to ruination. They were not to forget their iniquity.

- B. *Philippians 3:13-14*** *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

When Paul spoke of forgetting what was behind him, he didn't mean refusing to remember his past, but refusing to let his past prevent him from a better future.

1st Corinthians 15:9 *"I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."*

Truly, Paul recalled his former failings more so than just about any person ever.

V. "HOW LONG WILL THEY NOT BELIEVE ME?"

- A. *Numbers 13:31-14:23*** *"The men who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.' And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, 'The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.' So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, 'If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has Jehovah brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?' So they said to one another,*

'Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.' Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: 'The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If Jehovah delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, "a land which flows with milk and honey." Only do not rebel against Jehovah, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and Jehovah is with us. Do not fear them.'

until now.’ Then Jehovah said: ‘I have pardoned, according to your word; but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah — because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.’”

“These ten times” the Israelites tested God, and when they finally refused to take possession of their inheritance due to fear, God was filled with wrath. Once again, He intended to destroy the nation; once again, He offered to make a new nation of Moses; once again, Moses declined.

- B.** **Revelation 21:8** *“The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”*

The nation of Israel was nearly replaced by the nation of Moses on a second occasion because the people were afraid to claim their inheritance.

Cowardice and disbelief will send souls to hell.

- C.** **2nd Timothy 1:7** *“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

The spirit God puts in His people is not timidity, but power!