

"The Song of Moses II"

Exodus 15:1-10

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“1 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2 The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him. 3 The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. 4 Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. 5 The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. 6 Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. 7 And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. 8 And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. 10 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. (Ex 15:1-10)

Last week I spoke on these ten verses from the point of view of some of the attributes of God. I would like to consider it from a different perspective today: from the perspective of the House of God, the Church of the Living God.

This was triggered in me, and even on vacation I thought a great deal about it, by a question that was asked me right after the service and then at home by my wife. The NKJV on verse 2 says “I will praise him,” and the KJV says “I will prepare him a habitation.”

It may not come as a surprise to you, but I believe that the KJV is right. This is not a textual matter, but an interpretive matter. The Hebrew is not in dispute. There is no question what the Hebrew says. It says to “cause to have a house” Or "To cause to dwell." Matthew Henry on this spot says:

"In order to quicken them to serve God: in consideration of this, I will prepare him habitation, v. 2. God having preserved them, and prepared a covert for them under which they had been safe and easy, they resolve to spare no cost nor pains for the erecting of a tabernacle to his honor, and there they will exalt him, and mention, to his praise, the honor he had got upon Pharaoh. God had now exalted them, making them great and high, and therefore they will exalt him, by speaking of his infinite height and grandeur. Note, Our constant endeavor should be, by praising his name

and serving his interests, to exalt God; and it is an advancement to us to be so employed."

Calvin passes over this phrase entirely, and other standard OT commentaries take the other idea "I will praise him." The reason they give for not taking Moses at his word is insufficient. I have found two reasons: the great majority of the ancient translators make it "I will praise him" and "Moses at this time could have had no idea of building a tabernacle to the Lord. The first is easy to dispose of: a mistake can be proliferated by scholars following one another like elephants in the circus. The other is not sustainable: for one thing it would be incredible if Moses had NOT thought about building a house of worship for the Lord. Moses was also familiar with the History of the World, no doubt passed down from generation to generation of the godly from the time of Adam. He was commissioned of God to write this down, which he did in the first five books of the Bible.

For one thing, the phrase "House of God" is used only with reference to the Tabernacle and the Temple at Jerusalem in the Old Testament, with one exception, which we will look at in a moment. Also, anytime that God uses the word "My House" it is always in connection with the Tabernacle or the Temple. Jesus quoted this in cleansing the temple, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Of course, the purpose of the building of the temple was to praise the Lord, but the words say that Moses was determined to build a habitation for the Lord.

Having said that, I would like to look at the meaning of the House of God or a Habitation for the Lord in a couple of passages. One in the Old Testament, and the other in the New Testament.

I. Genesis 28:10-22 this is the first mention of the House of God in the bible. This is an important idea.

A. Summarize the details of Jacob fleeing from Esau.

B. His vision:

1. The ladder, with God above it, speaking to him.
2. The promise of God
3. Jacob's reaction: vs. 16ff.

C. New Testament interpretation: John 1:47-51. Nathanael. Jesus is Jacob's Ladder. Jesus is the Temple of the Lord. "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Re 21:22 AV). The temple is for our benefit; the house of God where He makes His presence known on the earth.

D. Every Jew who believed and searched the promises of God would have been familiar with this experience of Jacob and would have wondered at the temple. It is interesting that the tabernacle was at Bethel for many years before the temple at Jerusalem was built. Bethel means "house of God" and was a holy place for Israel.

II. The Second passage is Hebrews 10:21-26

A. Along with Hebrews 3:1-6

B. We are the House of God and all the elements of Moses and the Law are here in spiritual principle for the people of God.

1. The text: “19 ¶ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Heb 10:19-25 AV)

2. The meaning:

a) This is the way we enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus: a new a living way, not according to the deadness of the law, but in the life of the Spirit.

b) We have a high priest over the house of God, which house are we.

c) Worshippers must be prepared for worship: vs. 22

(1) Full assurance of faith: our sins are forgiven us, through the blood of Christ. This is before God.

(2) Baptized: purification, just as Israel was. This is before men.

d) Good and faithful profession of our faith without wavering. Thy word is truth. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth, according to Paul in 1 Timothy. This is the first table of the Law, along with vs. 25, not forsaking the assembling of the people of God. There is no temple and no church if there is no assembling.

e) Care for one another: love and good works. This is the second table of the law. God’s people love and care for one another. Exhorting one another means you have to see each other once in a while. Much moreso as we approach the end of the world.

3. Solemn warning to the Jew: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,” (Heb

10:26) Moses' house is no longer the temple of the Lord: the assembly of the church is.

III. Application

A. We should regard the church very highly. The church is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth. According to 1Ti 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. "House of God" does NOT mean the household of God or the family of God as some of the feelymeely translations put it, causing people to think that if they go to some happy little gathering of friends somewhere and read the bible a bit, they can dispense with confession of faith, baptism, elders, deacons, and ministers, preaching, and accountability, for everyone will just do as he pleases. You can have all goods in common if you really want to feel good—for a while. They think they are the family of God. Well, if you are in the family of God you will find yourself a good church and be in church on Sunday.

B. You have a responsibility to support the church with your attendance, your tithes, and your offering, and your love and care for the people of God. You do not live unto yourself and you do not die unto yourself. The Belgic Confession says:

Article XXVIII We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and outside of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them.

And that this may be the more effectually observed, it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the Church, and to join themselves to this congregation, wheresoever God has established it, even though the magistrates and edicts of princes were against it, yea, though they should suffer death or any other corporal punishment. Therefore all those who separate themselves from the same or do not join themselves to it act contrary to the ordinance of God.

Article XXX We believe that this true Church must be governed by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in His Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church; that by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors chastened [1] and restrained by spiritual means; also that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, according to their necessities. By these means everything will be carried on in the Church with good order and decency, when faithful men are

chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy.

Article XXXII We believe that our gracious God, taking account of our weakness and infirmities, has ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us His promises, and to be pledges of the good will and grace of God towards us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith; which He has joined to the Word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses both that which He declares to us by His Word and that which He works inwardly in our hearts, thereby confirming in us the salvation which He imparts to us. For they are visible signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing, by means whereof God works in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the signs are not empty or meaningless, so as to deceive us. For Jesus Christ is the true object presented by them, without whom they would be of no moment.

Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments which Christ our Lord has instituted, which are two only, namely, the sacrament of baptism and the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen and Amen
God bless you.