



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Exodus 32: 1-35

“Israel and the Golden Calf”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Heavenly Father, again we give thanks to Thee and we give praise to Thy name for the Scriptures which Thou hast preserved for us so that we may study them, ponder them, have instructions to hand concerning the life that Thou hast have us to live, each one of us in New Testament times. We thank Thee for this marvelous work of preservation and we recognize Lord the infinite majesty and power and wisdom that has made it possible for us to do just what we do and we thank Thee again for the freedom that we have to study the word and to ponder it in our nation when we reflect upon the fact that so many do not have that opportunity.

We give Thee thanks and we confess Lord to Thee that we are so often ungrateful, unthinking for that which Thou hast done for us and forgive us Lord for being so indifferent to the blessings, which we enjoy in a special way and we thank Thee for the privilege of study on these Tuesday evenings, and we ask now tonight that Thou be with us as we consider again a portion from the word of God and the experiences of the nation Israel as they came out of the land of Egypt on their way to the experience of the promise land which Thou hast in the Scriptures given to them and to those who belong to the people of God as well. Enable us tonight to profit from our time together.

We pray in Jesus' name Amen.

[Message] We are turning tonight to Exodus chapter 32, in our studies from Egypt to Canaan and next week contrary to the way in which the series had sometimes been announced studies of Exodus is not really intended originally to be studies in Exodus. It just so happens that the account of Israel's ministry and experiences and coming out of Egypt into the promise land, the earlier parts of it are set up for us primarily in the Book of Exodus, but next week we will be looking at Numbers and looking at the experience of the children of Israel when they came to Kadesh-Barnea and we will spend more than one time as we investigate those two chapters that have to do with their experience as they came to the borders of the land, and then turn back. But tonight we are looking at Exodus 32 and this is the chapter in which Aaron and the children of Israel built their golden calf because Moses has been on the mount with the Lord for so long.

Now this familiar chapter stands out for two lessons, one of them practical and one typical. Of course the practical lesson comes immediately to us is the warning against idolatry and that is one of the ways in which the Apostle Paul uses this particular incident in his chapter to which we were turned several times in 1 Corinthians as he illustrates certain experiences that they had in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, and verse 7, the apostle wrote to the Corinthians, "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." And you will recognize that this is a reference to verse 6 of Exodus chapter 32, where we read, "The people rose up early on the morning, they sat down to eat and drink, and then they rose up to play." So as we have tried to point out the Apostle Paul was a student of these portions of the word of God and so was our Lord because he too makes references to these events.

The warning against idolatry in our day doesn't seem to have quite the sting that it would have had in days in which people did engage in a great deal of idolatry, worship of idols and images, and things like that, but there is a deeper sense in which we may be

idolaters, even though we have never had an image or an idol in our home. When John finishes his first letter, he says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," and the chances are that he was talking about some of the approach to idolatry that Paul was talking about when he spoke about covetousness being idolatry. So, idolatry comes to refer ultimately to anything that we set up instead of the Lord God as an object of worship, as an object of concern, so it is possible to be guilty of idolatry in very, very many ways, in addition to the obvious religious way.

Now when we think about idolatry we think today perhaps in our western world in which we have a great deal of influence from Christianity of the images and statues and the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church. And it's right I think that we should think of that because the very fact that the churches of the Romanists are filled with images and filled with objects before which people bow and which they venerate is an evidence of the fact that they have gone astray. Because if a person should say, Well, to have an image is really not to believe in idolatry but this is just an emblem, which is an aid for worship. For example, in the olden times one of the people who worshipped the ox might have said, after all, the ox is a powerful animal and we worship the ox because that reminds us of the power of the Lord God. Or the calf, well after all we get a great deal of our food and sustenance from the cow, so that reminds us of the way in which the Lord supplies our physical needs, and so on.

There are many ways in which we might rationalistically find some reason by which we can refer our idolatry to the Lord God and try to justify but there is another side to idolatry, which we sometimes forget and this the apostles evidently had in mind and the prophets particularly. The prophets, really if you had seen those prophets, I think you would have seen the red veins on their forehead stand out when they talked about idolatry, because you see, an idol even if it were some means by which we might be reminded of the power of God or the provision of God, is nevertheless a corruptible image, and it is a corruptible piece of wood or gold or whatever material it may be made

of, and the very fact that it is, is itself a blasphemy against the nature of the eternal incorruptible God, so no image can ever properly represent the Lord God.

It is an attack on him ultimately and that's why the first statement in Exodus chapter 20, before the ten words are given is "I am the Lord Thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

And the reason the Lord did that was not because he was selfish and egocentric but simply he is the one who is the greatest object of worship in this universe, the only perfect being, the only person who exists from himself, and therefore since he is the only perfect being, all worship must be ultimately of him, and if it is of something else that is inferior, then of course it is an attack on the Lord God as if to suggest he should be satisfied with something less than himself.

Now you might be thinking, Well, after all I am not much and I certainly don't make any claim to sinlessness or majesty or power or anything like that, how is the Lord God interested in me? Well, he is interested in you not because of what you are yourself, but because of what he is making of you and because of what is from him that has come to be in you. So, the perfect God can only be occupied with that which is moral perfection.

So, obviously an idol or an image that we venerate is an attack on the nature of God. So, when a person says, Well these are things that help me, enable me to worship the Lord better, these types of rationalizations, you can be sure that is something that

comes under the judgment of God. Oh, that is the religion for me, cries one, none of you straight-laced has talked about worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

And Mr. Spurgeon is talking about this and his words are very interesting. He says, “The ox plows our fields and so produces our harvest; what a teaching symbol of the goodness of God. Many of the common people will learn more from this than from a sermon. So people, say, certain artistic people would add, each one in his own manner, this symbolic worship is so tasteful that it helps me to worship when I was in the camp and there was no golden image, I could never enter into such a bare worship, but I greatly admire this decorous and hearty service. The extemporary prayers of Moses and his brother were too poor for me that beautiful bull is aesthetic and arouses thought and emotion in the ceremonial apse is quite a model. Give me a little of Israelitish Egyptian in which you have the old embellished by the new, and by the help of music and genuflections I can indeed adore.”

And do you know that there are actually people who in the light of the Scriptures and affirming the Scriptures, like to say, it really aids my worship, to be occupied with things just like this. The idea of worshipping the Lord in spirit and in truth -- that seems so dull to so many people, but let me assure you if you will study the Scriptures and get to know them and get to know the Lord God, you will want to do just that because that’s what pleases him. The Father seeketh such to worship him, simple, direct, in the spirit, through the word of God. That’s a great practical lesson we will see in this chapter that it will come to the fore.

Now there is another thing here that incidentally, Voltaire, who had an insight into a lot of things speaking about what was happening in the Lutherans, in the Calvinists, in the Romanists, in his day spoke of the Mass and the Lord’s supper on the part of the Papists, and the Lutherans, and the Calvinists, and said, “The Papists eat God for bread, the Lutherans eat bread and God, the Calvinists eat bread and do not eat God.” He sensed the difference between transubstantiation and consubstantiation and the spiritual

communion which the Calvinists sought to honor in their observance of the Lord's Supper.

The other thing that comes forward here I think with great force is the picture of decision for God's mediator. Notice the 26th verse in a moment we will read it in context, "But 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." That's very emphatic in the Hebrew text. It reads something like this, "Who is for the Lord, unto me," there is no come at all, "Who is for the Lord, unto me?" Very direct, very forceful, very much to the point. And that was of course the exhortation that they needed.

Now the law was given while Moses was on the mount with the Lord God and the Scriptures say that Moses stayed on the mount for forty days and forty nights. That's long enough to forget anybody, isn't? Let's take, some of your husbands might leave home for forty days and forty nights, you would have to come back and introduced to your wife, wouldn't you? No, you wouldn't, she would know you were the same old irritable person after you have been there just for a few moments, wouldn't you? Well, you can see the children of Israel here, Moses has been absent now for forty days and forty nights. And let's read first six verses, where we have the making of the golden calf, "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, 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.

Now some people like to change "wot" to "we know not." I sometimes like the force of these old words. We wot not what is become of him. That really strikes on to me. But for those of you that don't understand your wots, we know not what has become of him.

“And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people break off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be Thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and he said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

Someone has said that and I think it was Augustine that probably Aaron thought to deter them by the statement of verse 2, break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. Just like I guess if someone were to say, let us make an image for the Lord God and you would say to your wealthy friends who have been hoarding their gold because of inflation, all bring your Krugerrands next Tuesday night and we will make an object.

Now you might say that conceivably, because you know they wouldn’t dare bring them and give them. Well, I don’t know that there is anything to what Augustine said, but that’s what he thought it perhaps, Aaron meant when he said, well bring your golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. In other words, Augustine wanted to soften the condemnation of Aaron who has lived a rather exemplary kind of life until this point. We will see of course that he is a human man not only here but later on as well.

But there was a warning that was given back and the Lord gave it to Moses and it is good advice. It is back in chapter 23 and verse 2. And as the Lord was speaking to Moses on the mount he said, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt Thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment. Thou shalt not follow a

multitude to do evil. In other words in the Law of Moses, it was never a good excuse to say everybody is doing it. As a matter of fact when everybody is doing it, that's when you should be suspicious about it.

Now we will say this for Aaron. He had not heard that yet, but nevertheless the principle is a principle that any thinking individual would know is a good principle. We should not follow a multitude or even one person if they are obviously engaging in that which is evil. Well, Aaron said, let's make a feast unto the Lord. The calf is going to be an aid to the worship of the Lord. So they rose up early, and they offered their offerings, evidently that was the religious flavor, the spice for the day, but what they really were looking forward to what was going to happen later on because there we read, they sat down to eat, and to drink, and they rose up to play.

So they were like a child with a new toy. They had gotten tired of worshipping Yahweh as he had been set forth by Moses and Aaron. They were just tired of that kind of thing, just like people get tired of coming to hear the exposition of the word of God. They get tired because we are people with the sin principle indwelling us and when we get tired, and bored, that's when we really need prayer, that's when we need to get down upon our knees, and say, Lord the ministry of the word of God is such a bore and then you should recognize that the problem as a root is right here, and ask God to take away the boredom and give you some of the freshness that you had once had and which you know deep down you need with reference to the things of the Lord.

Now I would like to suggest to you that this rising up to play is not rising up to go and play a game of golf. There is something far more sensual suggested by this. Notice for example, the nineteenth verse, And it came to pass, as soon Moses was coming back, as soon as he came now unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing. Well, one might even justify dancing. David did dance before the ark of the Lord in worship of the Lord, but this evidently was some kind of sensual dancing because we read in verse 25, "And when Moses saw that the people were naked."

Now there has been a little bit of a debate over the meaning of the Hebrew expression there, but I would like to suggest you that probably that is precisely what it does mean. So they were having a very good time, so they thought, enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season.

So now the wrath of God is expressed and in verse 7 through verse 10 notice how Moses tells the story, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for Thy people, which Thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." Did you notice that? Thy people. In other words, these people are turning away from the Lord and in warning he calls them not my people, Thy people, that's very impressive. Verse 8, "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed and thereunto and said, These be Thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people." Now that means that they were just as stubborn as they could be as far as spiritual things were concerned.

Now therefore, God says, "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." In other words, leave me alone Moses, I am going to make a new beginning. Now of course we have a conflict here between the decrees of God and his eternal determinations and the responsibilities of the people and the sin that they have sinned against him and the necessity of judgment and so it's presented with all the tension of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of men.

Now we know this is not going to happen. We know this is not going to happen, because God has already given promises, and he has given promises to Abraham and to his seed. And he said that Abraham and his seed are going to go into that land and they are going to have certain things. So the people of Israel are going to have their blessings

but they need a lot of divine theology on the way to the experience of them and they are still learning that theology and the church is still learning its theology too.

Now the first intercession of Moses follows, and you will notice that Moses is really the thinking man of this entire group of people. I want to tell you something. I knew I would have a chance to tell this illustration today because it is so true to spiritual things. Martha and I are tearing up our backyard and putting in a few little things walkway and a little small wall to cover a place, and so we had some work cut out for us, and there was a man who came with some sand to bring into the back of the driveway, the back of the house in order to make some cement, they were working over back there, and so it was very heavy, and I was worrying about breaking driveways, because great big loads of sand have been known to do that, and I was a little nervous.

But when the man got in, he was a great big man, a great big truck and his wife got up with him, and there was a little boy -- a little boy I don't know how old he is, but he couldn't be more than six and may be five, but he had a shrill voice, and he obviously had done this a lot of times, and really thought that he was knowledgeable in these things. And so as his father started backing very slowly up the driveway, he was saying over, with the shrill voice, over! [Laughter] Look out! Stop! Over, making all the signs, his father was paying no attention to him whatsoever. All this little talk going along and I wish I could give you that high pitched voice that this little kid was giving, he had all the outward signs, but his father was not paying him any attention because he didn't know what he was talking about. He had all of the signs, just like so many people in the church, they have got all the language of evangelicalism. They know all of the things that happen in a church but there is no reality at all. It is total immaturity.

Well, when you look at a chapter like this and you see the children of Israel, now they have had marvelous experiences, but they are children, not like the apostles, and Luke remember said, If the apostles had been with our Lord for several years, they understood none of these things. They were like that little kid, shouting, no, stop, go,

making signs. Goes on in all of our churches all the time, the elders, deacons, do those things too and preachers.

So anyway here the children of Israel and Moses now is going to give some reasons why God should not destroy Israel, three of them, he says, "And Moses besought the Lord his God, verse 11, and said, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against this people, which Thou broughtest forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Just think Lord of what you have done for them? Look at the past how in covenantal grace and power, you have brought them out.

Second, verse 12, Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people. And the next reason is simply think of what the Egyptians will say? We have given testimony that it's Yahweh who has brought us out and he has done all these mighty miracles and now we are to perish in the wilderness and what will they say. They will say, whatever that God was that those Israelites had he was a God that brought them out just to cause them to perish in the wilderness. So in other words, the name of God is at stake.

And then the third reason, follows in verse 13, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swearest by Thine own self, and had said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever." And they are the covenantal promises. So the mighty deliverance from the land of Egypt and then what the Egyptians would say, and thirdly the Abrahamic covenant. These are the reasons that Moses brings before the Lord God and says, "You cannot destroy them for these reasons." Moses is certainly an intelligent living man and well he is a long way from sanctification in its fullest sense. It is obvious that this man has grown tremendously in spiritual things and is a fitting leader for the immature children of Israel.

Now in verse 15, we read,

“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. Moses ears were evidently better than Joshua’s so he was able to interpret a bit better. And it came to pass, as soon as he came down nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, (so here is a man who has begun to think like the Lord God) and he cast the tables out of his hands, and break them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, (that’s what my text says) he strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.”

What a drink? Well, that’s just a reflection of the divine anger. Now of course, what was outward is what is said here, what was inward had already taken place. So, Moses is a man who inwardly is hot with anger and outwardly expresses it in this that he requires the children of Israel to do. There is a statement in the word of God that the Apostle Paul makes later on in which he says, “Be ye angry and sin not.” There is such a thing as anger that is a sin, but we read in Scripture that the Lord Jesus in one of his incidents in the events looked round about upon them with anger. There is a time when it is proper for Christians to be angry and to be angry and unbelief is perfectly proper. That’s not bad. That’s good. And in this case, Moses was hot with anger but it was righteous indignation. That’s what Paul means when he says, Be angry and sin not.

Now having done that, we listen next to the excuses of Aaron, verse 21 through verse 24, "And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that Thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" Now, notice when you look back at the beginning of this chapter it was the people who came to Aaron, but Aaron was the mouthpiece of Moses and a very important man and so when he yielded to their suggestions, it is proper for Moses to speak of him in this way, "What did this people unto thee, that Thou hast brought so great a sin upon them." And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, 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. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let him break it off. So they gave it me and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf."

Now these excuses are as old as Eden. The first of all is you know the people, Thou knowest the people, I couldn't help it. I was with some very honorary people, you know those Jews, there are lots of people to speak about the Jewish people like that, all the necessity of my situation after all we would have had a riot if I hadn't done what I did. I was compelled by the circumstances. Here we are, you were 40 days up in the mount, you didn't tell us you were going to be there 40 days, we didn't know what had happened to you, and furthermore, I have got some good friends, and they were very influential, and would have offended them if I had gotten angry at them, in fact they might have demoted me from the leadership position that I had held, all kinds of things are excuses for sin. You know the people, you know the situation. It's difficult to serve the Lord in such and such a position. It is difficult to serve the Lord in both circumstances.

Now you can have a lot of sympathy with people who have unusual tests and temptations, but you can never have sympathy with sin. You cannot have sympathy with sin because Jesus died for sin. Sin makes necessary the redeemer's death. One can

sympathize with people who are being tested, but not with sin. So, the excuse is just as old as Eden. You know the people, the woman that Thou gavest me, the serpent beguiled me, and the same old thing, human nature. But verse twenty four is so sad, it is amusing, Aaron says they gave me the gold, we cast it into the fire, and what do you know about that, the calf walked out, and out came this calf. Just look at it. It just happened. Now that's the way he puts it. Now Moses had said, "Aaron that didn't just happen." He would have said, Yes, I know, but he puts it that way because that's the best way to put it.

Now in the New Testament when the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews is talking about the high priest, he says the high priests are human and so a high priest to be a high priest must be human, and our Lord was human. Gethsemane shows he was human. High priests also must be appointed for their office. Our Lord was appointed for his office by the saying, "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," but in the description of the requirement of humanity and actually humanness as well.

The writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews says that, men are appointed high priests who have infirmity. In other words, he recognizes that all high priests have infirmity. Well, Aaron is certainly a high priest who is composed with infirmity. We understand but we cannot countenance it. And we ourselves even when we find ourselves in that same situation we must recognize that there is no excuse, we need to get down upon our knees, and confess our sin, otherwise, we lose the joy of the fellowship with the Lord God.

Now, Moses doesn't stop with this. Here we have call for decision, verse 25, "And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:), evidently others were around, Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, he went over to the gate of the camp, and he said, Who is on the Lord's

side, let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. Let me read on to verse 29.

"And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor, and the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day."

Now this picture is a typical picture. Moses is God's mediator. That is what he is called. That's why the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews will contrast Jesus Christ with Moses. They both were mediators. And just as the angels were the mediators by which Israel received the law, Moses is the mediator by whom God dealt with Israel in their passage from Egypt out into the Promised Land. And he looms large in the history of the Old Testament and in the history of Israel. So he was a mediator.

And this is typical of our Lord who is also a mediator from God, the antitype of whom Moses is the example, the one who came down to a world breaking God's law and cavorting and playing in spiritual matters here down upon this earth. If there is anything that characterizes humanity today and particularly in this Western world, it is people with a veneer of religion who are frolicking away their whole lives, not understanding the realities of the spiritual things that are set forth in the word of God. And if you think of the children of Israel were foolish and unwise, and did not have any comprehension of the ultimate spiritual realities and no appreciation of what it is to be rightly related to the Lord God, put the United States of America, in fact our Western world right there, because we have had tremendous privileges, greater privileges than the children of Israel had.

They had Moses and they had the miracles that Moses performed but we have had the greatest of all miracles, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a Christian history, a magnificent Christian history since then in the western world, and we if anything are no more serious than the children of Israel were in the days of the molten calf.

So, here is a beautiful illustration and so the mediator comes down and he calls out to the sinning people just as our Lord came down to a world breaking the law of God calling them to himself, come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, and he that is not with me is against me, so the Lord Jesus said, and the call is still going on through the preaching of the gospel for men to come to the mediator by whose side there is safety.

I love that twenty sixth verse because it so beautifully illustrates, our Lord in the midst of sinning people, Who is for the Lord? This is a necessary thing. Who is for the Lord? It is necessary to make a positive decision for the Lord. I love what Mr. Spurgeon said, he said, "There is a very numerous body of people who try to inhabit the betweenities. If we can sit somewhere in between; that is not the decision of rebellion but not the decision of dedication to the Lord." He went on to say, "There is no synagogue of the undecided on earth. He that is not honest is dishonest. He that is not chaste is impure. And so the Lord God calls us to him and to him alone for salvation."

So who is for the Lord, unto me? Moses is calling out for people to come to him and it is almost the voice of the Lord, who is for the Lord unto me and notice it is not only necessary because life was at stake, but it was to be done immediately. You couldn't wait around, you couldn't delay at all, you couldn't say give me until tomorrow, give me a little time, nothing like that. That really speaks to the necessity of spiritual decisions because we do not know what tomorrow may bring forth. No, really we don't know what tonight may bring forth. And the duty is to come to Me.

Well, someone might say, O, I wish we had a leader like Moses. We do have one, we have a better one. We have the one that Moses told us to look for, there is going to

come someone like me after me and to him the people are going to harken, and he is at the right hand of the majesty at the present time and through his ambassadors on earth, he is saying, who is for the Lord, unto me, come to me, because we are sinners, and we abide unto the judgment of God.

Now the last few words here are Moses' confession and intercession. It is remarkable. It is something that the Apostle Paul probably had in mind when he wrote these words in Romans chapter 9 and verse 3, you remember when Paul was agonizing over the nation Israel, because after all they were his brethren. And he said in chapter 9 verse 1 of Romans, I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. Think of that. Paul saying that he would be if it were possible, Greek grammarians call this as use of the imperfect tense here, impossible wish, impossible simply, because it is impossible theologically, but he was willing as he put it to give up his own eternal destiny in order that his people Israel might not have to pass into eternity without the mediator, the Messiah.

Now we read in verse 30 -- and think of Moses as a type of the Lord. By the way, Moses is the type of the Lord in many ways, probably about three or four or five months ago, we made some references to this, but both Moses and our Lord had an obscure birth, one is the son of a carpenter, the other is the man of the house of Levi; both were in peril in their infancy, one at the hands of Herod, the other at the hands of Pharaoh; both passed their youth in obscurity, one thirty years, the other forty years; both had a mission, both were rejected. That's the point Stephen makes when he preaches. He makes the point that just as Moses was rejected by the children of Israel so the Lord Jesus, the greater Moses has been rejected by the nation in his day.

Both showed signs and wonders. Moses performed his miracles to let people know that God was with the children of Israel. Jesus performed his in order that you

might know that he was truly the Messiah and the apostles followed up with the mighty miracles in order that you might understand that God is with this people and just as Moses' miracles died off; so the miracles of our Lord and the apostles have died off because the testimony has been given there is no need for any more testimony. Both will be sacrificed for the brethren.

Both were great prophets and deliverers. One a great prophet in Egypt and before the children of Israel, and one who delivered the children of Israel from Egypt. And the other a great prophet, the greatest of all the prophets, the eternal prophet who has delivered us from the hand of Satan but there is one big difference between them and it is expressed right here.

Let me read the rest of the chapter. "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; perhaps, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 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--;" that is a kind of an incomplete conditional sentence, that's the way you have to supply something in the Hebrew for this type of construction, it is yet now, if you will forgive this people their sin then let me undergo eternal judgment is the idea, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

You know we read in the Bible, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And so Moses here is offering in a sense to Lord, if you will forgive their sins, blot me out of the book but Moses cannot atone. Moses death would not do any good so far as they are

concerned. There is someone who has made an atonement, and he has ascended to the right hand of the father and there is no perhaps on his lips because he has made the atonement by which men may be delivered.

So Jesus does not have to say and if not or whosoever hath, well let me see, where is this verse starting, "Now I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your soul, there is no perhaps in our Lord's ascension. He has accomplished the redemption and the forgiveness of sins is poured out upon the people of God through the preaching of the gospel. It is a magnificent story. It is a warning against idolatry as we have said it also is a marvelous illustration of the necessity of coming to the Lord God and giving ourselves holy to him.

Do you belong to him? Is it really true that you do belong to him or you are resting upon the blood that was shed in atonement? Do you know you have the forgiveness of sins? May I ask you a further question? Do you really belong to him in your Christian life? As Moses said, who is for the Lord, unto me and may God enable us to give ourselves holy to him and not live as Mr. Spurgeon said in the between it is. There are so many of us it seems who spend so much of our time. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful for these wonderful lessons from holy Scripture. We thank Thee for Moses, a great man of God, with all of his failings, but who nevertheless had so many key points reminds us of the unparalleled majesty of Jesus Christ, the son of God. The greater than Moses, the greater than David, the greater than Aaron, the priest after the order of Melchizedek who has offered the atoning sacrifice by which sins may be completely paid for and forgiven and removed.

O God, if there is some in this meeting who have not yet the assurance of the forgiveness of their sins by Thy grace, bring them to rest now and forever in what Christ has done and Lord enable us to give ourselves holy to him. Deliver us from the frolicking

life that so characterizes not simply Americans in the west, but even those who profess the name of Christ so often and we know Lord because we too have so often turned aside from following Thee holy like a Caleb. Go with us tonight. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.