

"Famous Turning Points—Lessons in Intercession"

Exodus 32:11-14

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INTRO ...Famous Turning Points—American Revolutionary War - the Battle of Saratoga

"Without question the plan was ably formed; and had the success of the execution been equal to the ingenuity of the design, the re-conquest or submission of the thirteen United States colonies must, in all human probability, have followed; and the independence which they proclaimed in 1776 would have been extinguished before it existed a second year.

"The war which rent away the North American colonies of England is, of all subjects in history, the most painful for an Englishman to dwell on. ...But the contemplation of it cannot be evaded by the historian, however much it may be abhorred. Nor can any military event be said to have exercised more important influence on the future fortunes of mankind, than the complete defeat of Burgoyne's expedition in 1777; a defeat which rescued the revolted colonists from certain subjection; and which, by inducing the courts of France and Spain to attack England in their behalf, ensured the independence of the United States, and the formation of that trans-Atlantic power which, not only America, but both Europe and Asia, now see and feel. Edward J. Creasy, "Fifteen Decisive Battles Of The World"

-- The history of the Battle of Saratoga is filled with a recounting of specific strategies, goals, weapons, generals, and troops involved in this great Turning Point.

- It is hard to avoid the Observation that Ex 32:11-14 may be THE Most PIVOTAL Moment in our study of Exodus! ...it is a 'Decisive Battle' that shapes the unfolding purpose of God in the nation of Israel.Not to be treated lightly, **this turning point was birthed from a prayer closet** in intercessory prayer!

".... If we were really convinced that prayer changes the way God acts, and that God does bring about remarkable changes in the world in response to prayer, as Scripture repeatedly teaches that he does, then we would pray much more than we do. If we pray little, it is probably because we do not really believe that prayer accomplishes much at all. " Wayne Grudem, "Systematic Theology", p. 377

The Setting (of the Battle of Mt. Sinai):

Ex 32:7 ...The Setting for Great Intercession...

Corruption + Turning Aside + Idolatry => Intercessory Prayer

...At some point we are going to be ROOMMATES with people who have become corrupted or turned aside—This is the 'Setting of Our Lives'

WARNING: *It can become tempting for us in the face of 'corruption' to not respond with intercession, but rather to respond with irritation, frustration, and even self-righteousness ...or merely control or manipulation or human pressure!*

*"...we find Moses saying to God, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold." It has happened to you, I suppose, as it has to me, that in the sight of a great sin one has almost hesitated to pray about it. The person sinned so wantonly, under circumstances so peculiarly grievous, transgressed so willfully and so altogether without excuse, that you felt thrust back from the mercy-seat and from pleading for such a sinner; but it was not so with Moses. Idolatry is a horrible sin, yet Moses is not kept back from pleading for its forgiveness. It astounds him, his own wrath waxes hot against it; but still, there he is, pleading for the transgressors. What else can he do but pray? And he does that after the best possible fashion. Oh, let us never say, when we see great sin, "I am appalled by it; I cannot pray about it; I am sickened by it, I loathe it." ... I must confess that I sometimes felt as if I could not pray for some of the wretches who sinned so foully; but we must shake off that kind of feeling, and, even in the presence of the most atrocious iniquity, we must still say, "I will pray even for these..." **Charles Spurgeon**, "The Mediation of Moses"*

The Battle of Mt. Sinai (It's Weapons & Warfare)

Exodus 32:11-14 But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, 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? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth?' Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" ¹⁴ And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

- Here is the Decisive Moment ...yet Moses hasn't even gone down the mountain and interacted with ANYBODY!!—

"You can do more than pray, after you have prayed. But you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed. ... We think we can do more where we are through our service: then prayer to give power to our service. No! — with the blackest underscoring of emphasis, let it be said — No! We can do nothing of real power until we have done the prayer thing ..." **S.D. Gordon**, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*, p. 14

"Well now, it is in the field of prayer that life's critical battles are lost or won. ... In prayer we bring our spiritual enemies into the presence of God and we fight them there. Have you tried that? Or have you been satisfied to meet and fight your foes in the open spaces of the world?" **John H. Jowett**, *Classic Sermons on Prayer*, p. 56

The Weapons at the Battle of Mt. Sinai:

2 Cor 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

- **The Weapon of Knowing What You Are Aligned With—*who's side are you on anyway?***

Exodus 32:25-26 And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), ²⁶ then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.

- **The Weapon of Kingdom Priorities**

... at some point we need to gain an understanding of what matters the most in the Kingdom!!

-- *Jesus prayer in the Garden of Gethsamane ...*

Exodus 33:1-6 The Lord said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring I will give it.'² I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."⁴ When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.⁵ For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.'"⁶ Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

- Intercessors Need 'Clarified Priorities'! ...Moses receives an awareness that **'MOST' of what they were supposed to get from God, they will still get:** the Land (w/ milk and honey) ...God's Power over Enemies ...an Angel (guidance and supernatural power)—**But He Understood that THE PRIORITY of Mt. Sinai was the "Tabernacling of God"**

Exodus 33:12-18 Moses said to the Lord, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.'¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight.

Consider too that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" ¹⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory."

- **This is another decisive moment!** ...The future possibility is a People Unmarked/Uncharacterized by the Presence of God Among Them!

- **The Weapon of Persistence**

- The world we live in serves up regular doses of 'corruption, turning aside, and idolatry' ...this won't be the last battle you fight!!

Numbers 14:1-4 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. ² And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴ And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

- **The Weapon of Skillful Argument**

"...when we petition God, 'we should lay before God, as part of our prayer, the reasons why we think that what we ask for is the best thing.' ...Packer mentions that many older Christian writers talk about 'arguing' with God in prayer ...by 'arguing' they meant 'telling God why what we have asked for seems to us to be for the best, in light of what we know God's own goals to be.' This means embedding theological reasoning in all our prayers." Tim Keller, "Prayer", p. 226

Numbers 14:11-20 And the Lord said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? ¹² I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

¹³ But Moses said to the Lord, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, ¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ¹⁶ 'It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.' ¹⁷ And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ¹⁸ 'The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.' ¹⁹ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now." ²⁰ Then the Lord said, "[I have pardoned, according to your word].

- Moses 'familiar argument' ...Moses doesn't tire of arguing God's Character!