

Washington & Moses

It is customary, when new nations are established, that some great man, some “father” of the nation, make an inaugural speech (inaugurating the nation, not the person’s term of office). No doubt two of the greatest men who ever made such a speech were George Washington and Moses. However, when they made their respective inaugural speeches, those speeches were completely different—so different that they might be considered exact opposite of each other. Let’s look at some of their councils to their respective their “new nation”.

Washington¹

A few things that Washington advised or advised against:

He advised against the party spirit—whether it be based on geographical regions or on other things.

He advised his nation to shield yourselves against too much jealousies and heart-burnings.

The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish Government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government.

Liberty will be found in such governments that properly distributed and adjusted its power.

The party spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed. Washington even pointed out that in the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly the worst enemy.

The alternating domination of one faction (party) over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissensions, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a

more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.

Those who are intrusted with administration, ought to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another

Love of power and proneness to abuse it predominates in the human heart.

If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way, which the constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation

Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain men claim Patriotism without Religion and Morality. Neither can Morality be maintained without Religion.

Cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible—not throwing upon posterity that burthen which we ourselves ought to bear.

The Nation, which indulges towards another nation an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. So it is that a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake; since history and experience prove, that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government.

The greatest rule of conduct for us in extending our commercial relations to foreign nations is, have as little political connection with them as possible.

¹Copied from:

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Washington%27s_Farewell_Address

Moses Deuteronomy 31: (16-18 & 26-29)

16 And the LORD said to Moses: “...these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them.

17 And in that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and calamities will come on them, and in that day they will ask, ‘Have not these disasters come on us because our God is not with us?’

18 And I will certainly hide my face in that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.

26 “Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you. 27 For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die!

28 Assemble before me all the elders....and all your officials, so that I can call the heavens and the earth to testify against them.

29 For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall on you because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD and arouse his anger by what your hands have made.”

Back to the first verse in Deuteronomy 31:

1 Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel:

2 “I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, ‘You shall not cross the Jordan *River*.’

3 The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said.

4 And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land.

5 The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

7 Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance.

8 The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

9 So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.

10 Then Moses commanded them: “At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles,

11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing.

12 Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. 13 Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

14 The LORD said to Moses, “Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, where I will commission him.” So Moses and Joshua came and presented themselves at the tent of meeting *place* [tent].

15 Then the LORD appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the tent.

— **The first Moses Quote goes here** —

19 “Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. 20 When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their ancestors, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant.

21 And when many disasters and calamities come on them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath.”

22 So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites.