Jesus: The Later, Greater Moses (New Testament Figures)

Baptism, wilderness, bread and a mountain, with one great difference

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, July 10, 2022
PASSAGES	Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Mark 1:9-13; John 6:10-35; Mark 9:2-8; Mark 15:33-39; Exodus 24:8-16; Exodus 12:5-13; John 8:34-36; 1 Corinthians 5:7
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:05:50 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Moses promised that God would raise up a prophet like him, and the Gospels tell Jesus' story along the lines of the exodus: through the Jordan, into the wilderness, bread for a crowd, glory on a mountain, darkness before a firstborn's death. The parallels make the differences stand out. Jesus is not a better Moses but the God Moses served, rescuing us from a slavery no one else could break – sin itself – so that we can be free and belong to him.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Baptism proclaims that Christ saves through faith, not that I am believing hard enough today. If you think he did a good job, you are ready.
- Moses was not "bad" and the law was not his. God used Moses to rescue his people from slavery.
- Israel was "baptised into Moses" at the sea and into Joshua at the Jordan, with their leader going through with them. Jesus went into the Jordan to open a way for us to be baptised into him.
- Where Israel grumbled forty years in the wilderness, Jesus trusted for forty days.
- Moses did not make the manna. In the feeding of the five thousand Jesus breaks and multiplies the bread himself, and says, "I am the bread of life."

- Three hours of darkness preceded the death of the firstborn of all creation. Christ is our Passover lamb.
- God does not free us to get something from us. He needs nothing; he sets us free so that we can be free, know him and belong to him.

▶ 1:05:50

Announcing the coming baptism class, Matt set the tone for the morning: baptism is "a proclamation that Christ saves by faith, not a proclamation that I am believing hard enough today. So if you think he did a good job, then you're ready." After a long-overdue ninety seconds of introducing ourselves to our neighbours, and a plug for Wednesday's cook-off, he picked up the mini-series on Jesus.

Why Moses?

▶ 1:11:27

Last week began with the claim that frames everything: Jesus is God incarnate. ("A series within a series within a series… like the movie *Inception*.") This week: the Gospel writers seem to go out of their way to draw parallels between Jesus and Moses. Some will bristle – "Moses bad, because Moses law, law bad" – but Moses' leadership was not bad; God used him to rescue people from slavery. "And it wasn't Moses's law. If it were, it wouldn't have very much authority anyway." So first the exodus story, then Jesus, then why it matters.

The first exodus

▶ 1:13:12

Abraham's descendants settled in Egypt through Joseph and were later enslaved. God raised up Moses and gave him signs so the people would believe he was God's chosen leader – water from the Nile turning to blood (Exodus 4:8–9). The plagues were God's battle against Egypt's gods, and before the last came "pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days" (Exodus 10:21–22).

▶ 1:16:12

> "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old… and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight… The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you."
>
> EXODUS 12:5–13 ↗

▶ 1:17:19

Then, trapped between Pharaoh's army and the sea with grandmas, kids and a wagon full of stuff: "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD… The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent" (Exodus 14:13–14). Paul calls the crossing a baptism "into Moses" (1 Corinthians 10:1–2) – their leader went through with them – but the main emphasis is that God fought their battle when they had no options left.

▶ 1:18:34

In the wilderness God sent quail and a flake-like thing on the ground. "What is it?" they asked – which is literally what *manna* means – and Moses said, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat" (Exodus 16:14–15). He split a rock for water. At Sinai there was thunder, lightning and a thick cloud.

▶ 1:20:10

God called Moses up the mountain with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy elders, "but Moses alone shall come near." Then the covenant: "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you." They saw the God of Israel and ate and drank before him; then the cloud covered the mountain six days, and on the seventh God called Moses out of it (Exodus 24:1–16). God kept singling Moses out. (The law itself waits until next week.)

▶ 1:23:37

> "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen – just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.'"
>
> DEUTERONOMY 18:15–16 ↗

▶ 1:24:48

After forty years of wandering, Joshua led them through the Jordan on dry ground, with twelve men chosen, one from each tribe, to represent Israel. "The people came up out of the Jordan" (Joshua 4:19) – up out of, not merely across, giving it the shape of a baptism. Israel renewed, "baptised into Joshua."

Through the Jordan, into the wilderness

▶ 1:26:25

> "In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'"
>
> MARK 1:9–11 ↗

▶ 1:27:40

The location is the east bank, where Israel gathered under Joshua – a new exodus. Why was Jesus baptised at all? Even John wondered. But Moses went through the sea with the people, and Joshua walked through the Jordan with them. "This immersive experience hasn't so far been about the water. It's been about following God as a shepherd." Jesus is baptised "not just for him but for others… opening up a way to get baptised into him." And the heavens torn open answer Isaiah's prayer, "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down" (Isaiah 64:1) – a rescue not from Assyria, Babylon or Persia but from sin itself.

▶ 1:29:43

"The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan" (Mark 1:12–13). Satan could have tempted him anywhere; this echoes forty years in the wilderness. And the parallel makes the contrast stick out: unlike Israel, Jesus did not grumble, did not demand food, did not turn stones to bread. "Where we failed, he trusted."

Bread from heaven

▶ 1:30:50

With a crowd of about five thousand sitting on the grass, Jesus gives thanks and distributes the loaves and fish, "as much as they wanted." Twelve baskets of fragments are left, and the people say, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world" (John 6:10–14) – the prophet Moses promised.

▶ 1:31:59

Even the fish are pointed. When Israel complained in the wilderness, God asked, "Shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?" (Numbers 11:22) Here they ate "and were satisfied." He did provide enough.

▶ 1:33:00

> "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Jesus then said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven… I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.'"
>
> JOHN 6:31–35 ↗

▶ 1:34:18

It was not Moses waking up before the Israelites "with his basket of manna, just sort of doing this… God, you give me weird chores." God made it. But in this miracle, who is breaking and multiplying the bread? Jesus. "The parallels don't just make a connection between him and Moses. They exaggerate his differences."

Glory on the mountain

▶ 1:34:52

> "After six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white… And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses… And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.'"
>
> MARK 9:2–8 ↗

▶ 1:35:53

After six days, up a high mountain with three men, elders of Israel present, glory, a cloud, a voice singling one man out – "I don't know if that reminds me of any stories." But Moses came down with reflected glory from beholding God; here the glory is Jesus' own. And the voice says "listen to him" while Moses is standing right there.

Darkness before the death of the firstborn

▶ 1:36:42

Betrayed, tried and convicted of blasphemy, Jesus was handed to the Romans. "When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour" – three hours. He breathed his last; the temple curtain tore; the centurion said, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:33–39).

"Three hours of darkness preceding the death of the firstborn of all creation. It kind of reminds me of some other time."

▶ 1:37:53

So Jesus is not only leading God's people; he is the lamb by whose blood they are passed over. "Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump... For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Matt summarised: an enslaved, helpless people; a deliverer confirmed by signs; a baptism pointing beyond water; forty years and forty days; bread discovered versus bread given; twelve chosen men; a mountain, a cloud and glory; darkness before a firstborn's death; redemption through a spotless lamb.

Why the parallels?

▶ 1:40:08

Moses was never the mastermind; it was God's enterprise all along. And these are real events in real parallel – God prefiguring Jesus in the exodus, shaping Jesus' life to point back to it, and the Gospel writers drawing it out. Why? Because there is so much to what Jesus did that a template helps. Like Moses, he is a great deliverer. But from what? Not Rome.

▶ 1:41:26

> "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
>
> JOHN 8:34–36 ↗

▶ 1:42:08

Not Egypt, Babylon, Persia or Rome, but something no one has conquered, from Adam who saw, desired and took, through Ezra, Nehemiah and Zerubbabel. Instead of pointing mocking fingers at them, "we acknowledge that we practise sin and become slaves to it." Jesus, the later, much greater Moses, rescues us from that.

Free so that we would be free

▶ 1:43:29

And God is better than we are. We often do good for others to raise our status or start a law of reciprocity. God sets us free so that we would be free. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills

(Psalm 50:10–12); he does not need our gold or our food. Many ancient Near Eastern religions thought humans were made to feed hungry gods. Ours is not a god who thought, "It'd be helpful if I had a church that could do all my stuff for me, and then I could just have nectar and ambrosia."

▶ 1:44:59

What can you give God? Your heart – like the dancing before the Lord earlier in the service. "It's not like he was bored and needed a show," but we can give him ourselves. He set us free from sin so that we could belong to him; forgave us so that we could be forgiven; revealed himself so that we could know him. He parallels not just Moses but the giver of bread, the parter of seas, the deliverer himself, "because he is, after all, the Old Testament God himself." He gives eternal life to those who seek glory, honour and immortality (Romans 2:7) – and that is hard to accept, because we must receive by grace what we know we do not deserve.

▶ 1:47:24

Israel at the sea could not rescue themselves, could not feed themselves in the wilderness, could not conquer the land or stay faithful – and they knew it. "Here we are. We belong to him. We can't walk in total purity all on our own, and we know it." We have one Rescuer; it has always been God, on his terms, and he wants to rescue you.

> *"Place your trust in him. Don't even place your trust in how trust-ish you are. Place your trust directly in him."*

▶ 1:48:06

Matt prayed that even when we cannot trust how trusting we are, we would trust God himself, and that he would reveal himself and woo us back to him "again, again, again," reviving us and giving us life.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Exodus 4:8–9
- Exodus 10:21–22
- Exodus 12:5–13
- Exodus 14:13–14
- 1 Corinthians 10:1–2
- Exodus 16:14–15
- Exodus 24:1–16
- Deuteronomy 18:15–16
- Joshua 4:19
- Mark 1:9–11
- Isaiah 64:1
- Mark 1:12–13
- John 6:10–14
- Numbers 11:22
- John 6:31–35
- Mark 9:2–8
- Mark 15:33–39
- 1 Corinthians 5:7
- John 8:34–36
- Psalm 50:10–12
- Romans 2:7

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt said baptism proclaims that Christ saves, not that we are believing hard enough. How does that change the way you think about your own faith on a weak day?
2. Which parallel between the exodus and Jesus' life stood out to you most, and what difference between Jesus and Moses did it expose?
3. Jesus trusted for forty days where Israel grumbled for forty years. Where are you grumbling in a wilderness right now?
4. Jesus says everyone who practises sin is a slave to sin. What does it look like to be set free "indeed" rather than merely forgiven?
5. God frees us so that we would be free and belong to him, not to get something from us. What would it look like this week to give him yourself rather than a list of tasks?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phPvgSUVptQ&t=3950s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.