



Key Passage: Matthew 28:18-20

Key Thought: Jesus is the new Moses, the law, the wisdom, and the interpreter of God himself. For Jesus is “God with us.”

The Gospel in Matthew.

Matthew 23:10—Christ is your one teacher.

Intertestamental period: Qumran expected someone to come: “The Teacher of Righteousness.”

No doubt who this person would remind them of: Because there were many teachers, but only one could go by “the teacher.” That was Moses.

Climbed the mountain and dared to touch the face of God. Sat in the mountain. Gave the law, or the “teachings.”

Moses’ name appears 7 times in Matthew—perfect number.

Go, show your gift as Moses commanded.

Divorce. Why did Moses command us to give a certificate of divorce.

Teacher, Moses said if a man dies with no kids, his brother is supposed to marry the widow and give her kids.

“Moses said this. Moses said that.”

Neil Pryor: Brother Huey....Fooley on Huey.

Jesus tries a different tact. He says about the Pharisees—don't do what they do...but you should respect what they say. For when they act as teachers, they “sit in Moses' seat.”

But leave it Matthew to go one step further...is it possible that even Moses was sitting in someone else's seat.

[tell story of Moses and Jesus according to Matthew]

Matthew wants you to start by saying “is this the teacher of righteousness? Is this the new Moses? Is he close to Moses? Is he like Moses?” And when you get to Matthew 17, Jesus goes up on a mountain and his face is shone like the sun. If you were watching, you'd think of that time when Moses went up in the mountain and God's face was so bright that even Moses' face shone like the sun; he had to wear a veil when he spoke to others! So at this point you'd be thinking, “yes, yes, he's the new teacher second only to Moses!” And that's when Moses appears. Right there on the mountain. What? Could it be that Jesus is actually equal to Moses? Peter is willing to take even that leap. “I'll build three tents: one for Elijah, one for Moses, and one for Jesus.” A tent was also the word for tabernacle, where you go to meet God. Maybe we have three spokespersons for Yahweh. I can live with that.

But then. Voice from the cloud—the cloud that led the children of Israel by day. The cloud that encircled the mountain as Moses entered it. The voice from the cloud thundered, “no—this...THIS is my son! In Him I am well pleased. Listen to HIM” (Matt 17:5).

Go back to that passage we began with: Matthew 23:10: Don't call anyone on earth your “teacher,” because you have one teacher—and his name is Jesus Christ.

So, when Jesus ascends the mountain in Matthew 5, he ascends as an after effect like Moses, but also a forshadowing of the return of the Son of Man to glory. And when he sits down, he dares to take the place of the teacher of righteousness who declares God's message from the holy mountain. As Joseph Ratzinger puts it, when Jesus “sat down”, he was taking up his seat in the cathedra of Moses. The earlier crowd, around the first mountain, had said “Let Moses speak to us, but not God!” Here, God himself speaks—not out of a mountain burning with fire—but seated, conversing with his disciples (and you and I) “as with a friend.”

The new Moses predates Moses and is pre-eminent over Moses. The new Moses is actually the original law himself!

He spells this out for us. In Matthew 12:

One greater than the Temple is here (Matt 12:6): Law

One greater than Jonah is here (Matt 12:41): Prophets

One greater than Solomon is here (Matt 12:42): Writings

IF HAVE TIME:

[Same story with David. No King like David. It's his city. It's his Temple. Or is it? The book starts out saying Jesus is "son" of David. When people need help, they cry out "Son" of David (Matt 15:22; 20:30)... Then Jesus gets questioned about the Law, and he uses David as his example. David did something that feels like an exception. Why can't I? Is he making himself equal to David? Oh, he's just getting warmed up! He heals people, he comforts people, he speaks with authority, and all the people say to themselves, "could this be the Son of David" (Matt 12:23). When he enters the Holy city, the crowd uses two lines that are hard to square with each other. They say "blessed O Son of David," and "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"! So Jesus uses this as a fitting backdrop to do a mic drop. "What do you think about the Christ," says Jesus, "whose Son is he?" You want to say "son of David." But if that's true, how does David, in the Spirit, call him "Lord," and "my Lord"? Jesus concludes, "If then David calls him Lord, how is he his Son?" (Matt 22:45)]

He may be "son" of David and Abraham (1:1), but he's Lord of all! "All authority in heaven and earth" (Matt 28:18).

Moses was the spokesperson for the Law. But what was the law? 613 commandments? How silly of us to think of it that way. You could keep lots of laws and be so far from God it would turn his stomach. The law was always about a state of mind, a way of being in the world. The law could be boiled down to five things in the end of Deuteronomy (10:12-13): fear, walk, love, serve, obey; three things in Micah (do justly; love mercy; walk humbly with God-Micah 6:8); two things in Jesus: Love God and Love others (22:40). Those three in Micah might be in mind when Jesus says you have forgotten the weightier matters of the Law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt 23:23). But what do those look like? The answer? Jesus Christ. That's what they look like. Jesus Christ. If you think Jesus is breaking the law, it's your view of the law that needs to be checked. If you think Jesus runs roughshod over the law, it's your view of the law that needs to be fixed. If you think Jesus ignores, changes, modifies, rearranges, or even removes the law, it's your view of the law that needs fixing!

He lives it out perfectly. He reads Deuteronomy and takes it to heart, determined as he stares down Satan in the desert that he will be faithful where Israel wasn't (4:1-4). He gets the warnings about destruction, and announces to the leaders they are playing the same old song (Matt 21:33-46).

Jesus doesn't just give us the law, he IS the law and he is the INTERPRETER of the law. Because he shows us the face of God. He is more than a prophet; he is whom the Prophets bore witness, and the one who inspired the prophets in the first place. His words are more than wise sayings. He is wisdom personified. Read Proverbs 9. Read about Wisdom calling out to keep us from folly, and see a description of Jesus Christ.

Even today, we are tempted to worship a book. I love the Bible. But when we read Matthew the same way the Pharisees read Deuteronomy, we miss the point. We go looking for a rule, a line, an authoritative statement, and we live and die as people of the Book. But God wants us to live and die as people of the GOD OF THE BOOK! That only happens when we start to model our lives after Jesus Christ. I'm not opposed to finding models in the New Testament. But you can find a model of how to be a neighbor, or how to be citizen, or how to run a Bible class, or how to be an elder, or how to do a worship service. And you can follow that model to a T and just be blowin smoke. I know that, because the Pharisees read their Old Testament that way and the prophets over and over again said, you've got the rituals down pat. But I can't find a burning heart among you to save my life! Where is God in any of this?? And so I say to you—do we smell like Jesus when we are done? Do people see Christ in what we do and how we do it? Do they see radical love and abundant mercy? Do they see a call for holiness mixed with a humility that would point not to ourselves but to the Master? Do they see us holding out a list of do's and don'ts, or do they see us holding out a cup of living water and a handful of bread of everlasting life?

This is my Son. This is my Son. This is my Son. Hear Ye Him!

Hear the gospel in Matthew. Christ is the law. He's the prophets. He's the wisdom from God. In fact, he shows us God himself.

In Matthew 1:23, they were to call his name Immanuel, which means "God is with us." And in the end of the book, Jesus says to all his readers, "don't worry. For I am with you always." And we don't have to fear. For God is with us in the person of Jesus Christ.