

When Moses Wrote of Jesus

3. Exodus

“For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.” 2 Corinthians 3:14b. (ESV)

Exodus 1:15-22: “ ... *Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, 'Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.'*”

Matthew 2:13-18: “ ... *Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under ...*”

Note: In the New Testament, particularly in Matthew's account of the life of Jesus, Jesus is portrayed as a new and better Moses. Although Jesus fulfilled the covenants of Abraham and David, it is the life of Moses that is similar to the life of Jesus.

Exodus 2:16-3:1: “ ... *The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock ... Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian ...*”

John 10:7-16: “ ... *I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep ...*”

Ezekiel 34:1-16: “ ... *'As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out My sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ...*”

Note: Moses rescued the seven daughters of the priest of Midian from shepherds, an image both foreshadowing the role of Moses as a rescuer and also the role of Jesus as rescuing the people of

Israel from Israel's corrupt shepherds. Also: Moses was a shepherd, a trade common to the great men of the Old Testament, and the trade by which Jesus most often referred to Himself.

Exodus 3:13-15: “ ... *And He said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ ...*”

John 6:20, 35, 48, 51; 8:12, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7-14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5-6.

Note: In the above passages we have the I AM statements of Jesus. In these statements, Jesus intentionally made Himself out to be God by calling Himself by the same name as the God who appeared to Moses. In the Septuagint, God tells Moses that God's name is I AM – *ego eimi* – which is the way Jesus referred to Himself in these passages.

Exodus 4:1-5: “ ... *But the LORD said to Moses, 'Put out your hand and catch it by the tail' – so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand – 'that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.'*”

Mark 2:9-12: “*Which is easier, to say to the paralytics, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Rise, take up your bed and walk”? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins' – He said to the paralytic – 'I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.' And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this!'*”

Acts 2:22: “*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know ...*”

Note: God conducted miracles through Moses to make known for sure that God had sent Moses, which is later how Jesus proved His Messiahship while on earth, and the apostles proved the truth of their teachings.

Exodus 7:20-25: “*Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in*

the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. ...”

1 John 5:6: *“This is He who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the One who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”*

John 19:34: *“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.”*

Note: It may be only coincidence, but it is certainly interesting that the first plague changed water to blood – a transformation very significant to Christians.

Exodus 12:1-28: *“ ... 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 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, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.' ...”*

1 Corinthians 5:7-8: *“Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”*

Revelation 12:10-11: *“And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.'”*

Luke 22:13-23: *“ ... And He said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with*

you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He said, 'Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ... This is my body, which is given for you. ... This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.' ...”

Note: In the institution of the Passover there is much that can be seen of Jesus. Some examples include: 1. The sacrificial lamb, pointing to Jesus; 2. The institution of the Passover, which Christ used as a time to memorialize the Lord's Supper; 3. The total conquest of God over the enemies of God and His children; and 4. The necessity of the blood of the lamb for salvation.

Exodus 12:46: *“It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.”*

Psalm 34:20: *“He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.”*

John 19:36: *“For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken.'”*

Exodus 14:19-31:¹ *“Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them ... And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ...”*

1 Corinthians 10:1-4: *“For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.”*

Note: Paul links crossing the Red Sea with baptism and with Christ. Later Paul continues to explain that the Israelites even put Christ to the test when they were destroyed by serpents.

¹ It may not be a reference to Jesus, but Luke specifically recorded Jesus fulfilling Exodus 13:1-2 in Luke 2:22-23.

Drinking from the Rock that was Christ could be a reference to Exodus 17:6 or Numbers 20:11 or both.

Understanding the Larger Concept: In the New Testament, the situation of Christ's disciples is regularly compared to that of Israel under Moses. With this understanding, a greater picture emerges that demonstrates the providence of God in human history and salvation.

With Moses we read: 1. Israel was enslaved to Egypt; 2. God sent Moses to redeem the Israelites;² 3. They passed through the Red Sea which destroyed their enslavers; 4. They entered the wilderness for an extended period of time – a time of hardship but a time in which God spoke to the people through Moses and a time in which God took care of Israel's physical and spiritual needs; and 5. Those who had faith in God and didn't doubt or grumble entered into the promised land.³

With Jesus it is revealed that what God did in human history with Moses was a shadow of something greater to come with Christ: 1. People are enslaved to sin;⁴ 2. God sent Jesus to redeem the world;⁵ 3. Those who follow Christ are baptized into His death and washed of their sins;⁶ 4. We are now in a wilderness, in which God takes care of our physical and spiritual needs;⁷ and 5. We are waiting to enter into that final rest, and must have faith to do so.⁸

Exodus 16:2-12: “ ... *'Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.'* ... ”

John 6:26-59: “ ... *'I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.* ”

2 Exodus 15:13.

3 Numbers 14:20-24.

4 Romans 3:23; 6:15-23; John 8:34-36.

5 John 3:16-17.

6 Exodus 15:26 (God is Israel's healer); Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21-22; Romans 8:1-2.

7 Acts 17:25; John 12:49-50.

8 Hebrews 3:12-4:2.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven.' ...”

Exodus 16:22-30; 31:12-18: “ ... *'This is what the LORD has commanded: “Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.”’ ...”*

Hebrews 4:1-11: “ ... *So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his ...”*

Note: Though the Sabbath was introduced in Genesis, it is in Exodus that God commanded people to observe it. Entering into the ultimate Sabbath, as the author of Hebrews explained, is a primary focus and purpose of disciples of Christ – without faith in Christ no one will be able to enter.

Exodus 19:16-25: “ ... *Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. ...”*

Galatians 4:21-31: “ ... *Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar ... But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ...”*

Matthew 5:17: “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.’”*

Note: In a terrifying image, a holy God came down and established His holy Law with Moses – the Law which Christ ultimately fulfilled. This image vividly demonstrated the difference between the covenant God made with Israel through Moses and the covenant God makes with

people today through Christ: The Law, which is sin and death, incurs God's judgment.⁹

Exodus 24:15-18; 34:28: “ ... *Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.*”

Matthew 4:1-2: “*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.*”

Exodus 25:10-26:37: “ ... *'They shall make an ark of acacia wood. ... You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. ... And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. ... And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. ... Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet yarns; you shall make them with cherubim skillfully worked into them. ... And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. ... And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. ...*”

Hebrews 9:1-28: “ ... *Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ...*”

Matthew 27:51a: “*And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.*”

Note: God gave instructions for the design of what the author of Hebrews referred to as “copies of the heavenly things.” Notice that much of it was covered with cherubim. Cherubim guard access to the things of God, such as the tree of life.¹⁰ Here, cherubim guard the tabernacle curtains, the veil, and even the mercy seat. The mercy seat in the Greek is the “atonement

⁹ Galatians 3:10-14; Romans 7:7-12.

¹⁰ Genesis 3:24.

cover” – *hilasterion*. When the Old Testament was translated into Latin, it was translated as *propitiatorium* – “the place of propitiation.” In God's instructions to Moses in the building of these things, God essentially laid out what Jesus accomplished. Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, was the only one qualified to pass the cherubim, to tear down the veil, to enter into the Most Holy Place, and to be the atonement and propitiation for our sins as revealed in the Law – which was represented in the ark and guarded by cherubim.

Exodus 29:42-46: “ ... *I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. ...*”

Hebrews 8:1-7: “*Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. ...*”

Note: The author of Hebrews wrote that the true tabernacle – or “tent” – is the heavenly one, whose high priest is Christ.

Exodus 30:11-16: “ ... *The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the LORD's offering to make atonement for your lives. ...*”

Galatians 3:13-14: “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree' – so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.*”

Note: There are many other passages which indicate that a price needed to be paid, and which Jesus paid Himself. In Exodus we have another perspective on the price that needed to be paid to atone for the lives of anyone who would be an Israelite. And the price didn't change, but was the same for each person.

Exodus 31:18: “*And He gave to Moses, when He had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.*”

Ezekiel 36:26-27: *“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules.”*

Jeremiah 31:31-33: *“ ... 'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’”*

Note: The covenant of the Law was written by God on stone and is intentionally compared to a new covenant enacted by Christ in which God will write His laws on the hearts of His children and will help them to fulfill His laws Himself.¹¹ This promise to all of God's covenant people can be seen even in Exodus when God filled Oholiab and Bezalel with His Spirit to do His work.¹²

Exodus 32:7-14: *“ ... And the LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.' 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 a great power and with a mighty hand?' ...”*

John 11:49-53: *“But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.' He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put Him to death.”*

Note: In a type and antitype, God was going to make a great nation of Moses and destroy the

¹¹ The Jeremiah passage is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12.

¹² Exodus 31:1-11; 35:30-36:1.

people, but Moses interceded for the people, and God's anger was abated. Yet with Jesus, the better Moses, Jesus interceded for the people by taking the wrath of God onto Himself, and through this, God made a great nation from Jesus.

Exodus 33:17-23: “ ... *And the LORD said, 'Behold, there is a place by Me where you shall stand on the rock, and while My glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by. ...'*”

Romans 9:32b-33: “*They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.'*”

Matthew 21:42-44: “ ... *'And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.'*”

Note: There are no less than seventeen verses in the Bible which refer to Jesus or His work as a rock or a stone,¹³ and even more which refer to God as a rock or a stone, so it hardly seems coincidental that God told Moses that there was a rock next to God, and that Moses was saved from the glory of God by being put into the cleft of a rock.

Exodus 34:29-35: “ ... *Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.*”

2 Corinthians 3:7-18: “ ... *For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ...'*”

¹³ Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; Daniel 2:34, 35, 45; Matthew 21:42, 44; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Romans 9:33; 1 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Peter 2:4, 6, 7, 8.