Jesus the Greater Moses

1. The Torah

a. The word Torah literally means "instruction"—meaning some sort of guidance in life. But when Jews say "Torah," they're speaking of the Five Books of Moses, the foundation of all Jewish instruction and guidance. The Torah was written by Moses, so it is called "the book of the Law of Moses". [a]

b. The Five Books of Moses are actually one section of a collection of works which are known as the Tanach (תנ"ך). What we would call the Old Testament. Tanach is an acronym of the words: Torah: (Five Books of Moses), Nevi'im (Prophets), Ketuvim (Writings, such as Psalms, Lamentations and Proverbs) If you've ever looked at a Jewish Bible you will find the New Testament is in this order.

c. Our English bibles have 4 sections: Pentateuch (the books of Moses), History, Writings, Prophets. The history and the prophets are one in the Jewish bible as it is all seen as prophetic, hence Jesus' reference to the Law and the Prophets i.e. the whole Old Testament

d. The Pentateuch comes from the Greek prefix 'penta', meaning five. The Torah/Pentateuch forms a backbone for the rest of the OT and NT theologically (Deut 26:5-10; Josh 24:2-13; Acts 13:17-41). The books contain a chronological and theological progression that tells of the re-establishment of God's rule on earth through man over evil and over all creation.

i Genesis: The origins behind the founding of the theocracy (God's divine rule) and the promised blessing of the seed in the land and of all peoples through the seed

ii Exodus: The redemption of the seed of Abraham out of bondage and the formation of this people to be a nation with a constitution

iii Leviticus: Israel's culture is established by providing a manual of ordinances to help with their needs when approaching God who is going to live among His people in holiness (Lev 26:11-12)

iv Numbers: YHWH orders Israel's walk (the military arrangement, census of the tribes, transport of the tabernacle), but Israel disrupts YHWH's order; Nevertheless, the promised blessing cannot be frustrated from within or from without

v Deuteronomy: The reconstitution of the nation under YHWH to enter the land through a covenant renewal in legal-prophetic form.

e. Over the next few sessions we are going to look at the remaining 4 books of the Pentateuch and consider how Jesus is revealed in the life of Moses, in the events of the Exodus and journey to the Promised Land and the objects and activities of Tabernacle worship.

f. Moses is clearly a foreshadowing of Christ – in a sense he is actually a foretaste or the appetiser before the main meal! In other words, what we see in Moses prepares us for the far greater revelation in Jesus.

2. A prophet like Moses

Deut.18:15 *The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you—from your fellow Israelites; you must listen to him.*

a. In one of Moses' final speeches, he gave this messianic prophecy. The prophet whom Moses foretells bears these qualities: He will be raised up by God, He will come from among the Israelites, He will be like Moses, and He will be worthy of being heard and obeyed. The prophet who fulfils these words is Jesus Christ, the prophet like Moses.

b. On the banks of the Jordan River, the Jews questioned John the Baptist about who he was and why he was baptizing. Their question "Are you the Prophet?" (John 1:21) shows that they were looking for the fulfilment of Moses' prophecy. John plainly informed them that he was not the Prophet but pointed them to the One who was:

John 1:26-27 *John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not recognize, [27] who is coming after me. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal!"*

c. John's description of the Messiah as one "among you" recalls Moses' prediction that God would raise up the Prophet "from among you" in Deuteronomy 18:15

d. In his sermon at the temple, Peter affirms that Jesus is the prophet like Moses

Acts 3:17-23 *And now, brothers, I know you acted in ignorance, as your rulers did too. [18] But the things God foretold long ago through all the prophets—that his Christ would suffer—he has fulfilled in this way. [19] Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out, [20] so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he may send the Messiah appointed for you—that is, Jesus. [21] This one heaven must receive until the time all things are restored, which God declared from times long ago through his holy prophets. [22] Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must obey him in everything he tells you. [23] Every person who does not obey that prophet will be destroyed and thus removed from the people.'*

e. Of course, this Jewish audience would have been familiar with Deuteronomy 18. Peter emphatically tells the crowd that the great Prophet like Moses has finally come. It's Jesus of Nazareth.

f. After all, Jesus meets all the criteria. As the Son of God, he's the only one who had communicated with God face-to-face (John 1:18). Furthermore, he not only communicated the very words of God; he was the Word of God incarnate (John. 1). And, of course, his public miracles are well documented.

g. For Jewish people Moses is the foundation and cornerstone of their faith. He is the great deliverer who is the type of "The Prophet" to come. Therefore, it should be no surprise to us that in Moses' life God was directing them to the greater Moses i.e. Jesus.

3. Jesus the greater prophet

a. In the story of the Exodus, God's people are enslaved and lost. They have not heard from the Lord for 400 years. Understandably, they longed to hear from Him again. Reminiscing the days of their patriarch Abraham, they longed for the Lord to speak to them once more. Thus, God sent a prophet named Moses.

b. Unfortunately, when the average person hears the word "prophecy," the first thing he thinks of is "foretelling the future." But throughout the Scriptures, foretelling the future is only peripheral to being a prophet. Primarily, **a prophet is someone who speaks on God's behalf**. He is a spokesman for the Lord, someone who simply takes the divinely revealed words of God and brings them to its recipients. This was the job description God provided to Moses when He declared, "You shall speak all that I command you" (Exo. 7:2).

c. Moses was a prophet set apart by God from the other prophets – no-one else in the Old Testament talked to God as Moses did. Even in the last Old Testament book, some of the last words the prophet Malachi penned were, "Remember the law of my servant Moses." Then God curiously said nothing to His people for 400 years. Imagine the longing and angst of this season of waiting. When is the Lord going to speak again? When is the great prophet like unto Moses going to arrive? God's people waited century upon century for that prophet to arrive. As they did from Joseph to Moses.

d. They were looking for someone who would be like Moses, and maybe even greater. They were waiting for someone who would bring a new revelation of God to them, and that prophet would be Jesus. When Jesus finished his famous Sermon on the Mount, Matthew says, "the crowds were astonished at his teaching." Why were they astonished? Matthew continues, "for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes." Jesus is the greater prophet because he brought the whole truth with an authority that is unsurpassed.

e. Jesus is also the greater prophet because he not only brought the truth, He is the truth. While Moses was the prophet who brought the words of God to people, Jesus Himself is the eternal Word that was sent from the heavens to save sinners.

Luke 24:44-45 *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." [45] Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures*

f. Jesus' disciples had heard and known of His teachings, but their minds were blind to the depth of their meaning. Their spiritual vision was dim. Jesus is not only the one who is the truth, He illumines truth. Moses was only able to speak, and God would open the minds of the Hebrews. Jesus, the greater Prophet, is God in the flesh. So He not only held the authority to speak, He also had the power to open their minds so that they could understand the gospel truth of God's Kingdom.

4. Jesus Fulfils the Law

a. As a prophet of God, Moses spoke God's words to God's people. He was a messenger. One of the greatest messages the prophet delivered, of course, was the message of the law of the Lord.

Lev.19:1-2 T*he Lord spoke to Moses: [2] "Speak to the whole congregation of the Israelites and tell them, 'You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.*

b. In two words the message was "Be holy". For generations, Moses would be considered the herald of God's Ten Commandments, the one who delivered the law

so that God's nation might be set apart from all other nations, a witness to the world about the character of their holy God.

c. However, Hebrews is clear:

Heb.7:18-19 *On the one hand a former command is set aside because it is weak and useless, [19] for the law made nothing perfect. On the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.*

And in Galatians we are told:

Gal. 3:24 *Thus the law had become our guardian until Christ, so that we could be declared righteous by faith.*

d. The greatest ability and purpose the law of God has is to tutor us and teach us, pointing us to the only hope we have from the law's demands: the Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:17 tells us, "the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Mat. 5:17 *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfil them*

e. The grace of God in Jesus Christ doesn't render the law void but fulfilled. Jesus fulfilled it by living the perfect law-abiding life that we could never live and dying the law-satisfying death that we deserved to die.

f. Jesus died on the cross and paid our debt so that we would stand justified, freely by His sovereign grace (Rom. 3:24). While Moses delivered the demands of the law, Jesus fulfilled them when no one else could. And He did so on behalf of sinners like you and me.

5. Jesus the greater Mediator

a. Moses not only spoke on behalf of God to His people, he also spoke on behalf of the people to their God. He was a mediator. Essentially, a mediator is someone who stands in the gap between two opposing parties. Since sin caused a gulf of separation between God and His people, there had to be a God-ordained mediator who would "stand in the gap" between God and man. For the Israelites, the prophet Moses became the mediator Moses.

b. We know that Moses had a special and unique relationship with the Lord. He "used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." (Ex.33:11) Moses did not see this special relationship as something for his own benefit but realised that this gave him a position in which he could intercede on behalf of God's people.

Ex. 33:13 *Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your way, that I may know you, that I may continue to find favour in your sight. And see that this nation is your people.*

c. While Moses served as a type of mediator, the Bible tells us there is only one true mediator—a mediator who can perfectly close the gap between God and men:

1 Tim. 2:5-6 *For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, [6] who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God's purpose at his appointed time*

d. Only Jesus, the God-man, could serve as this perfect mediator. Sin had broken our relationship with the Creator, placing our natural depravity in opposition to God's perfect holiness. So we needed a mediator who would stand in the gap, so to speak—someone to seek our good and make our cause his cause. That mediator is Jesus. He mediated between God and men through the ransom of His blood

e. Moses interceded in prayer for God's people in the tent of meeting (Exo. 33). Jesus mediated for His people in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mat. 26). In fact, He is mediating right now at the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34).

f. Jesus is greater than Moses. Jesus is the mediator who is the very revelation of God. He is the divine Word who was with God, and is God (John 1:1). Moses saw God face to face. Jesus is the one through whom the rest of us can now see God face to face.

6. Jesus the Greater Deliverer

a. Israel was forced into slavery for 400 years. And during this era of seemingly perpetual bondage, the nation of Israel cried out for rescue and redemption. God heard their cries and raised up a prophet who would deliver them. The Lord speaks to Moses through a fiery bush, commissioning Moses to deliver His people.(Ex.3:7-10)

b. There, on the mountain of Horeb, through the bush of fire, God made it clear that He would use His servant Moses in huge ways. He gave Moses His very name ("Yahweh"), and He commissioned the prophet to lead Israel out of its four hundred year captivity. It's no wonder that Moses was considered the ancient hero of Israel. He would become the peoples' deliverer.

c. Centuries later, God would send another deliverer—a truer and greater deliverer who would deliver not only the Hebrews but the Gentiles too. Moses' deliverance did not require a cross. It was merely a temporal deliverance, not an eternal one. Jesus, on the other hand, would deliver His people from eternal death to eternal life. This required Him to take up a cross.

d. Moses' exodus was possible because God's wrath came down upon Pharaoh's son. Jesus' exodus is possible because God's wrath came down upon His only begotten son—the Lord Jesus Christ who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus is the truer and greater Moses who leads His people in the greatest exodus of redemptive history—deliverance from the prison of sin and death.

John 3:16 *For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*

[a] *The Books do give indications of Moses as its writer: He was ordered to write historical facts (Ex 17:14; Num 33:1-2), laws (Ex 24:4, 7; 34:27ff) and one poem (Deut 31:9, 22) Moses is affirmed as author in the rest of the OT: (Joshua 1:7-8; 8:32, 34; 22:5; 1 Ki 2:3; 2 Ki 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Dan 9:11-13; Mal 4:4) and the NT refers to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch (Matt 19:18; Mark 12:26; Luke 2:22; 16:29; 24:27; John 5:46-47; 7:19; Acts 13:39; Rom 10:5).Thus, Moses is testified to be the author of the whole Pentateuch in a unanimous way in the Talmud and the Church Fathers!*