

The Life of Moses

• Lesson Seven •

Moses Led Israel with God's Word

1. Moses gave Israel God's law
2. Moses taught Israel God's gospel
3. Moses pointed Israel to the great Prophet yet to come

Worship

As God's great prophet, Moses spoke troubling words (law) and words of comfort (gospel). We find that double-edged sword of God's Word in a psalm Moses wrote, Psalm 90. You will notice that in verses 3-11, Moses preaches law, and in verses 13-17, he preaches gospel. Notice too how Moses' words ring true today, 3,500 years later.

Read Psalm 90

L: Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

G: Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

L: You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men."

G: For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

L: You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—

G: Though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered.

L: We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation.

G: You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

L: All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.

G: The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

L: Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.

G: Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

L: Relent, O LORD! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants.

G: Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

L: Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.

G: May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children.

L: May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—

G: Yes, establish the work of our hands.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, help us use the law as you intended. Help us to say:

The law uncovers guilt and sin
And shows how vile our hearts have been;
The gospel only can express
Forgiving love and cleansing grace.

My soul, no more attempt to draw
Your life and comfort from the law.
Flee to the hope the gospel gives;
The one who trusts the promise lives. Amen. (CW 286:2,4)

Introduction

Who comes to mind when you hear the word *leader*? Give your definition: A leader is . . .

Generally we speak of people leading in two ways, by their words and by their actions. Which do you think is more important? Why?

In today's lesson we watch as Moses led Israel by teaching them God's Word—his law and his gospel.

Studying God's Word

Moses led by word and by example. His leadership differed from that of secular leaders of history. Moses did not speak his own high-minded opinions or lofty sounding words, he spoke the very words of the true God. He recognized that the leadership he provided for the Israelites was secondary to the leadership the coming Messiah would provide. Moses would lead the people to the promised land of Canaan, but Christ would lead people to the promised land of heaven. Through faith in Christ, Moses looked forward to his Savior's reward (Hebrews 11:26).

Moses gave Israel God's law

The gospel writer John penned that "the law was given through Moses" (John 1:17). Yes, when we visualize Moses, we see the Ten Commandments on the two stone tablets in his hands.

Read Exodus 20:1-17

1. Of what did God remind the people before he gave them his commandments? (verse 2)

2. What threat did God announce after delivering the First Commandment? (verse 5)
3. Evaluate this statement: Most of us know what is God-pleasing and what isn't. The more difficult task lies in finding the strength to do what is God-pleasing.
4. Where do we find the strength to follow our caring Lord's loving commands?

His Word in My Life

“Through the law we become conscious of sin” (Romans 3:20). The purpose of God's law is to make sinners aware of their sins and threaten those who are comfortable in their sins. Do we still need the law preached to us in this way?

Agree or disagree and why? If we simply tell people what God wants them to do and what he doesn't want them to do, they will be motivated to serve him.

God's Old Testament people were given the law to show them their sin and lead them to appreciate the gospel. In the mirror of God's law, we see the wrinkles and blemishes of our own sins.

Moses taught Israel God's gospel

Moses brought God's law down from Mount Sinai. If that's all Moses had proclaimed as God's prophet, Israel would have been without salvation. But Moses also proclaimed grace. After his resurrection Jesus said to his disciples, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44). In the following text, Moses gives a visual aid to the Israelites that prefigures the work of their coming Savior.

Read Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:14-16

1. Why did death enter the Israelite camp? (verse 5)

2. What was Israel's God-pleasing response to their sin? (verse 7)

3. What "escape" did God provide for the Israelites? (verse 8)

4. How does this account parallel with the life and work of Jesus? (John 3:14-16)

His Word in My Life

Speaker A preached, "Christ was sacrificed for your sins. Forgiveness and salvation can be yours if you are sorry for your sins and ask God to forgive you. Confess your sins; decide now to let Jesus into your heart."

Speaker B preached, "Christ was sacrificed for your sins. He has washed you clean and made you whole. You stand forgiven. Believe in him and, as surely as Christ lives, so surely you will live with him in heaven."

Why has Speaker B done a better job of proclaiming the gospel?

Sometimes it seems as though our world is drowning in a cesspool of godlessness. What is more needed today: a good deal more law or a healthy dose of the gospel? Discuss.

Are there ever times when we should withhold the gospel from someone? Discuss.

Although Moses was the lawgiver, he lived his entire life in view of the promised Savior. His law condemned sin, but grace was never far behind; when the people sinned, Moses became God's mouthpiece to give them forgiveness. We perform that same work. Faith comes into people's hearts by our laying the gospel promises before them.

Moses pointed Israel to the great Prophet yet to come

Read Deuteronomy 18:15-18, John 1:45, John 6:14, and Acts 3:20-22

1. What characteristics does Moses ascribe to the future Prophet?
2. What were the people to do when this prophet was “raised up”?
3. How do we know that this prophecy pointed to Jesus?

His Word in My Life

At Christ’s transfiguration God said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” (Matthew 17:5). As our Prophet, Jesus still speaks to us through the Word of God. What is more important, listening to Jesus or obeying him?

John, a member of the church, makes a semi-annual visit to church at Christmas and Easter. Whenever the elders of the church talk to him about his infrequent worship habits, John responds by saying, “I know Jesus was born, died, and rose from the dead. If I know that, I’m going to heaven. Right?” How would you respond to John’s statement?

Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Christ carries out his office of Prophet by sending believers to share his gospel. Does Christ have a backup plan if we fail? Discuss.

Moses was a great prophet. Through Moses, the Lord gave Israel its law. And through Moses, God also pointed Israel to the coming Savior. Moses' message to Israel is of great comfort and encouragement to us today.

Summary

Moses' life and ministry set the pace for the entire Old Testament. Old Testament Israel lived under Moses' law. This law fulfilled several purposes, the most important being to drive Israel to its knees and lead them to yearn for the peace of God's forgiveness. Moses taught the people about the great Prophet who was to come, Jesus, the Christ. In this way Moses faithfully carried out his mission of leading Israel out of bondage and into the arms of its loving God.

Life with God

Fill in the blanks: Our lesson has dealt with the high points of the Bible's account of this portion of Moses' life. Fill in the blanks by reading the book of Deuteronomy. If you wish, find a chapter you would like to study and read *Deuteronomy* (The People's Bible commentary) on that chapter. Or, if you are reading all of Exodus through Deuteronomy, continue by reading Deuteronomy 22–34.

- Day 1: For another gospel lesson from Moses' life, read about the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:1-22 and what it prefigured in Hebrews 9:11-28.
- Day 2: Why didn't Moses enter the Promised Land? Read Numbers 20:1-13. The answer is found in verse 12.
- Day 3: Read about Moses' final days in Deuteronomy 34.
- Day 4: Read Luke 9:28-36. You will find the prophet Moses talking with the Prophet about his crucifixion.
- Day 5: Read Hebrews 3:1-6. Scripture gives high praise to Moses. Yet, all honor goes to Christ. That's how Moses would want it.
- Day 6: Read Romans 3:19-31 and Ephesians 2:1-10 for good descriptions of the difference between law and gospel.