

## Series: OT signs of Jesus// Moses: faithful servant

This is the third **sermon** of our series on OT people who point us to Jesus.

And as with **all** the sermons in this series it's like we are taking snapshots of these heroes. We could easily spend weeks on any one of these people. But if we open our hearts, we can still learn a lot in one morning!! And of course, you're encouraged to go deeper with your home groups.

In previous sermons we've established three important things:

- God is the same God in the Old and New Testament—but **the way we perceive Him** changes.
- God is gracious to us: he accommodates us by 'starting from where we are' and walking with us.
- God's plan is to bless all nations through his people Israel.

Today we look at Moses. Moses is mentioned throughout the Bible. To understand who he is and how he relates to Jesus, we will start with a text that names them both:

Hebrews 3:3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.

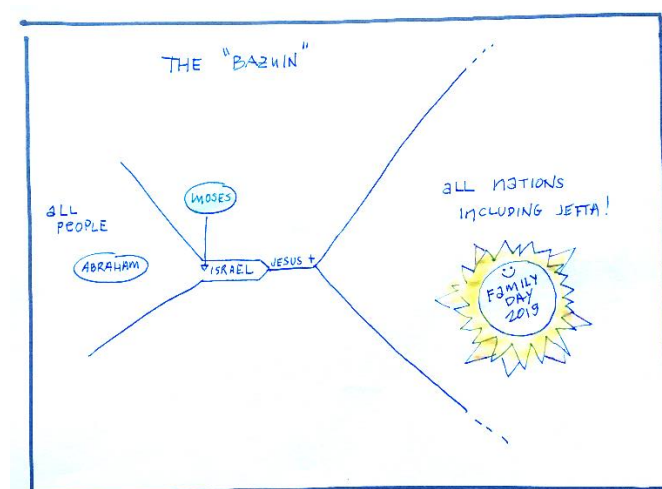
Jezus echter werd grotere eer waardig geacht dan Mozes, zoals de bouwer van een huis meer eer krijgt dan het huis zelf. nbv

As followers of Jesus we agree that Jesus is worthy of all honour, above anyone. Why then does the writer of this letter compare Moses and Jesus? Is there some problem we should know about? Some people could not see beyond Moses-- that he was pointing forward to deeper spiritual freedom for all nations. They also didn't see that Jesus would be the one to accomplish this.

### The importance of Moses

God called Moses to help him do **two things**: first, to liberate the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery. Second, to unite them as God's own people. Through his people God would send the messiah, who would save all nations.

I've got a visual aid here, courtesy of John Bazuin:



Do you see how it resembles what we call in Dutch a 'bazuin'? You see that on the left and right sides it's wide open. In the middle it narrows down. Look closely and you see it's a timeline moving from left to right. On the left side, God created mankind, revealed himself to Abraham and made a promise to him to bless all people through his descendants. To do this, God focused on forming these descendants into a people who would know Him. See how the diagram gets very narrow there in the middle? That's the people of Israel. At the start of this narrow part is where Moses (green circle) comes into the picture. Before Moses, they were just slaves with a common background. Notice now how the narrow part turns into a single thread. That represents Jesus, born and raised as a Jew with a Jewish identity. He lived among us, as one of us. When Christ is raised from the dead, God's plan goes viral.

Let's get into Moses and the Exodus story. It's a great story told in the first 5 books of the Bible (GELND).

Why is this story **great**? I can name three reasons.

First, it's the foundational story of God and his people. Throughout the Bible—OT and NT-- you find references to the Passover, the exodus and God's faithfulness to his people.

Second, the exodus story has given hope to many people over the centuries—including Jesus himself as well as other, suffering people who looked for hope amidst despair. This is why we call it a meta-story.

Third, even to the average person it's an amazing story, filled with drama. Movies have been made of it. Bad guys and good guys, chase scenes, life and death... Miracles coming at just the right time—to overcome great challenges..

What were some of the challenges Moses faced? I'll name a few:

- **Leadership nightmare:** The Hebrews were an enormous group of stubborn, often quarrelsome, people —perhaps as many as 2 million people. One of the most taxing logistical operations in human history – without modern technology
- **Bad starting position:** The Hebrews were slaves to a great world power who depended on their labor. The Egyptians were not going to let them go.
- **Big Trust issues:** The Hebrews needed to learn to trust God. They were familiar with the stories of the “God of our fathers A,I and J”, but they didn't know, trust and love him personally. They also didn't trust Moses fully.

**These were big challenges!**

**Story in a (very small) nutshell:** God miraculously set the Hebrews **free** and then Moses led them into the **desert** on the way to the Promised Land. God defeated the Egyptian army that pursued them. Then God gave them everything they needed for the journey (food, water, guidance, protection).

That's the nutshell.

Of all the ways God provided for the people, the most important thing he gave them is what we call 'the law.' **the Law** is much more than the Ten Commandments. The law is God's manifesto in which God reveals his character and his loving intentions. He is saying, “This is who I am, your Lord. And this is who you are, my people. This is your destiny.” It is through Moses that God gave them his law. This is why the Jewish people honour Moses.

But we must not stop there. God's plan stretches much further. He wants to reveal his heart, so we can trust him. John 1:7

'The law came through Moses. Grace and truth came through JC'

De wet is door Mozes gegeven, maar goedheid en waarheid zijn met Jezus Christus gekomen. nbv

This verse shows us a process of God revealing who He is. Moses bringing the law is not the end-point, but an intermediate point.. Let's look at our '**bazuin**': Moses made it possible for the Hebrews to unite as God's people. Jesus was born a Jew. He grew up with a rich understanding of the law. As son of God and yet one of us, he was able to go deeper than Moses could. The law could only show us how much we need a saviour. Christ became the saviour we need.

Moses **revealed** God's law. Jesus **revealed** the grace-filled Father-heart of God. He invited people to draw close to his Father. For example, he called us "God's dearly loved children". And Jesus taught us to pray, '**our** Father who is in heaven.' And some people could accept that. They became followers of Jesus.

But there were others who preferred Moses over Jesus. They were comfortable with the law. They knew how to meet its requirements. Grace is more challenging: it requires trust in God and in his love for you. Some people accused Jesus of disrespecting Moses. Indeed, Jesus, as you may know, often challenged traditions and rituals established by the Jewish leaders. However, he said this:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. Matthew 5:17

Denk niet dat ik gekomen ben om de Wet of de Profeten af te schaffen. Ik ben niet gekomen om ze af te schaffen, maar om ze tot vervulling te brengen. nbv

Also interesting what Moses thought...Did he consider that he was speaking the 'final word' from God? No, he knew that God was working a bigger plan. God told him this, and Moses told it to the people:

Deuteronomy 18:18 The Lord said to Moses, 'I'll raise up for them a prophet like you from their kinsmen. I'll tell him what to say and he will pass on to them everything I command. And anyone who won't listen to my words, spoken by him, will be held responsible.'

Ik zal hun een profeet sturen, iemand uit hun eigen volk, een bemiddelaar zoals jij. Ik zal hem meedelen wat hij tegen hen moet zeggen. Ik geef hem volmacht namens mij te spreken. Wie hem niet als mijn woordvoerder aanvaardt, zal ik ter verantwoording roepen. GNB

This points to Jesus. But the people didn't remember these words that Moses spoke. They seemed to have a selective memory about Moses. It's like they have this image in their minds: there is *Moses, standing strong. And the people around him joyfully followed both God and Moses into freedom. The people received the law and kept it.*



Reality was much different. As successful as he was in his mission, Moses was not the ultimate success. When things went wrong, the people complained and rejected him. They could not trust him as God’s messenger. Yet they themselves didn’t want to talk with God personally. See the signs carried by the people in the background? The people have mistrusting fearful hearts. “let Moses talk with God (so we don’t have to!)”



Moses is a towering figure in the Old Testament. But what, now, is his legacy? His ‘main claim to fame’? Moses foreshadows the way that Jesus forms a people for God. There are three parallels between Moses and Jesus in the exodus story. They show the ways that Jesus fulfills what Moses started to do.

First, when the time finally came for the people to leave Egypt, Moses commanded the people to sacrifice a Passover Lamb.

**What did Jesus do?** He became our Passover lamb. Jesus’ sacrifice showed us that God is FOR us, and that we can trust him.

Second, Moses led the people through the Red Sea. Israel’s enemies were defeated, drowned in the sea.

**What did Jesus do?** When God raised Christ from the dead he defeated the real enemy--the spiritual powers that held us hostage. Jesus’ resurrection shows us that God is strong. Jesus is the author of our faith in a good, strong Father.

Third, Moses gave us the law to reveal God to his people. This was not the optimal way to relate to God. It was given to the people because they didn’t want to relate with him personally.

**What does Jesus do?** he writes God's law of love on our hearts, through the Holy Spirit. All people of all nations can know him personally now.

**Hebrews 3** uses the imagery of building a house to compare the works of Moses and Jesus. (This time from the *message* translation)

So my dear Christian friends, companions in following this call to the heights, take a good hard look at Jesus. He's the centrepiece of everything we believe, faithful in everything God gave him to do. Moses was also faithful, but Jesus gets far more honour. A builder is more valuable than a building any day. Every house has a builder, but the Builder behind them all is God. Moses did a good job in God's house, but it was all servant work, getting things ready for what was to come. Christ as Son is in charge of the house. Now if we can only keep a firm grip on this bold confidence, **we're the house!** Hebrews 3:1-6

U allen, heilige broeders en zusters, die deel hebt aan de hemelse roeping, richt uw aandacht op Jezus, de apostel en hogepriester van het geloof dat wij belijden, 2die trouw is aan wie hem heeft aangesteld, zoals Mozes in heel Gods huis zijn taak trouw vervulde. 3Jezus echter werd groter eer waardig geacht dan Mozes, zoals de bouwer van een huis meer eer krijgt dan het huis zelf. 4Elk huis heeft zijn bouwer, maar God is de bouwer van alles. 5Mozes vervulde trouw zijn taak in heel Gods huis, als dienaar die getuigde van de komende openbaringen, Christus echter is trouw als Zoon die over dat huis is aangesteld. Wij vormen dat huis, mits we trots en zonder schroom vasthouden aan datgene waarop wij hopen. nbv

This brings us back to the meta-narrative. God's ultimate plan is to form a house in which God can dwell because his people, his children, trust Him.

Jesus is building that house from all nations for his Father.

He makes us into ONE family – one people – one household—with the SAME law of love written on our hearts. That is what we are celebrating today on this family day. We are one family because we have one Lord. Christ leads us out of the kingdom of fear into the kingdom of faith, hope and love.

Amen