

Lesson Five

A.D. 70

The Lawgiver Greater than Moses

“The LORD your God **will raise up for you a prophet like me** (Moses) from among you, **from your countrymen**, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘*Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.*’ The LORD said to me, ‘*They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to My people all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.*’ (Deuteronomy 18:15-19). The ‘it’ in verse 19 is “death.”

Andy Stanley has taken a brutal verbal beating over the Internet for his statement in an April 30, 2018, sermon, “Christians need to unhitch the Old Testament from their faith” He has since written a book entitled *Irresistible: Reclaiming the New that Jesus Unleashed for the World*. Andy Stanley writes clearly:

“Jesus’ new covenant, His covenant with the nations, His covenant with you, His covenant with us, can stand on its own two nail-scarred resurrection feet. It does not need propping up by the Jewish scriptures. The Bible did create Christianity. The resurrection of Jesus created and launched Christianity. Your whole house of Old Testament cards can come tumbling down. The question is did Jesus rise from the dead? And the eyewitnesses said he did.” (Andy Stanley).

In this lesson, I hope to show you that a Christian doesn’t “unhitch” the Old Testament. Rather, the Old Testament becomes the foundation of the house you build (your life). But you don’t live “in” the foundation. Rather, you live in the freedom and comfort of the house that is built on the foundation. Jesus is the New Moses. He is the Lawgiver for your life. The Law from His lips is the Law for your life at all times.

I. The Prophet Like Moses Is Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Matthew Reveals This Clearly.

“The Lord your God will raise up a prophet like Moses from among your countrymen” (**Deut. 18:15**).

There are eight ways that Jesus is “like Moses” in His life and in His ministry among God’s people.

1. Just as Pharaoh (the King of Egypt ca. 1575 BC) killed all the baby boys of the Hebrews, and only Moses is saved (**Exodus 1:22 – 2:10**), so also Herod (the King of Israel at the birth of Jesus) kills all the male babies in Bethlehem, and only Jesus is saved (**Matthew 2:13-18**).
2. When Moses’ life is in danger, he flees from Egypt to Israel, but returns to Egypt after many years (**Exodus 2:15; 7:6-7**); when Jesus’ life is in danger, he takes the reverse itinerary: from Israel to Egypt and later back to Israel (**Matthew 2:13-21**).
3. Just as Moses goes up to a mountain to receive the Law (including the *Ten Commandments*) from God (**Exodus 19:3**), so also Jesus goes up to a mountain to give a new Law (including the *Ten Beatitudes*) to the people (**Matthew 5:1**). “Rejoice and be glad...” is the 10th Beatitude.
4. Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, ‘*See the blood of the covenant . . . that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words*’ [**Exodus 24:8**] Through blood Moses was the mediator of the old covenant. Through blood Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant. “*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out...drink*” (**Matthew 26:28**).

5. Just as Moses does not eat or drink for forty days and forty nights while on the mountain, recording God's Law (**Exodus 34:28**), so also Jesus fasts for forty days and forty nights in the desert, being tempted by Satan (**Matthew 4:2**).
6. Just as the lawgiver, at the close of his life, commissioned Joshua both to go into the land peopled by foreign nations and to observe all the commandments in the law, and then further promised his successor God's abiding presence, so similarly Jesus: at the end of His earthly ministry He told his disciples to go into all the world and teach all the commandments uttered by the new Moses; and then He promised his abiding presence (**Matthew 28:16-20**).
7. Jewish tradition states that at Moses' death, "The angels mourned, the heavens were shaken, lightnings flashed, and a heavenly voice spoke (*The Jewish Midrash on the Death of Moses*). [So] several strange things happened . . . when Jesus died. The sun went dark (**Matthew 27:45**). Then the temple veil was rent (27:51). Then the earth quaked (27:51) the dead rose up (27:52-53).
8. Just as Moses was thought to have written the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (**Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy**), so also the teaching of Jesus is contained in five speeches or extended 'discourses' in Matthew (**Chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 22-25**). "
9. Overall, Moses was considered the greatest teacher, prophet and lawgiver in the Hebrew Bible (and throughout the New Testament); so also, Jesus is portrayed in Matthew's Gospel as a great teacher, prophet and lawgiver, equal to or even greater than Moses.
10. The Mount of Transfiguration reveals Jesus is the greatest Prophet and Lawgiver of all time. (see **Matthew 17:1-8**). Your life is to be lived in obedience to the commands of Christ.

II. The Law of Christ Is Called "The Royal Law" and Encompasses the Heart of God.

"But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first great commandment. And a second is like it: Love your neighbor *as yourself*. On these two commandments hang the Law and Prophets (Matt. 22:34-40).

According to Jesus, *if you do not love yourself*, you will not be unable to love your neighbor. It is impossible to love God "with all our heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" until you're captivated with God's love for you. Everyone knows from personal experience that real, genuine heartfelt love is drawn from a heart that is being loved! The soul that is loved conditionally, radically, faithfully and steadfastly is magnetically drawn to love in return. Until a human comprehends God's radical love in Jesus, he or she will never radically love God. We love Him **because** He first loved us.

There is a subtle difference between loving yourself and demanding others love you. Loving oneself means I am from the pressure that others love me. What does it matter if others reject me if Jesus loves me and I love myself? Demanding others love you is a tell-tale sign that there's really no self-love. Crazy as it may seem ("upside-down-wisdom"), the more you seek love the less you self-love.

"A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you (John 13:34). What's new here? "As I have loved you." Hang your hat on this: If God Himself came to die for you, if God Himself gave His life for you, if God Himself sheds His blood to redeem you, if God Himself--the God who flung the stars and holds the earth in its orbit--if He deemed you worthy of coming to earth, fulfilling the Mosaic Law in your place, dying in your stead because of your sin, then the love of this God in the death of Jesus should be enough to convince you that you are indeed someone very special. I propose to you that only when you are utterly captivated by what Jesus has done for you will you comprehend the worth and dignity of your person. Nothing will separate you from God's love.