

## Learning from the Matthew's Church (3) Jesus as the New Moses

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### (3) Jesus as the new Moses

- The figure of Moses (bible and tradition)
- Matthew 1-2 (the Infancy Narratives)
- Matthew 4 (the Temptation story)
- Matthew 11 (the Great Thanksgiving)
- What has Matthew achieved?

#### The figure of Moses (bible and tradition)

- No more important figure in Israelite history and in later imagination.
- Key event: the Exodus
- Key document: the Pentateuch
- Key expectation: Deuteronomy 18:15
- Pre-Matthean tradition confirms this

Deuteronomy 18:15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.

- Joshua and Josiah | **leaders and/or kings**
- Gideon and the future Messiah | **saviours and deliverers**
- Ezra, Ezekiel, Hillel | **teachers or revealers**
- Jeremiah and the Suffering Servant | **intercessors and suffering prophets**
  
- Jesus | **leader and king, saviour and deliverer, teacher and revealer, intercessor and suffering prophet**

#### Matthew 1-2

- Introductions to the Gospel
- Mark 1:1 and John 1:1-18
- Luke 1-2 and Matthew 1-2
  
- Same task: the disclosure of the full identity of Jesus
- Different ways: theology (Mk + Jn) or narrative (Mt + Lk)

Genealogy 1:1-17	Conception 1:18-25	Magi 2:1-12	Massacre 2:16-18	Egypt 2:13-15, 19-23
Abraham David Exile Tamar Rahab Ruth Bathsheba Mary	Joseph Ishmael Isacc Samson David  Emmanuel = Isaiah 7:14	Balaam Balak   Bethlehem = Micah 5:2	Moses Exile   Rachel = Jeremiah 31:15	Joseph Remnant David  Moses = Hosea 11:1  Nazorean = Isaiah 4:3; Judges 16:5-7; Genesis 49:26; Isaiah 11:1?

- Exodus 1: The Birth of Moses
- Exodus 2: Moses flees his homeland
- Exodus 4: Moses is called to return

Jesus	Moses
Matt. 2:13 Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and <b>flee to Egypt</b> , and <b>remain</b> there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to <b>destroy</b> him.”	Ex. 2:15 When Pharaoh heard of it, he <b>sought to kill</b> Moses. But Moses <b>fled</b> from Pharaoh. He settled in the land of <b>Midian</b> , and sat down by a well.
Matt. 2:16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and <b>killed all the children</b> in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.	Ex. 1:22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “ <b>Every boy</b> that is born to the Hebrews you <b>shall throw</b> into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”
Matt. 2:19 When <b>Herod died</b> , an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and <b>said</b> ,	Ex. 2:23 After a long time the <b>king of Egypt died</b> . Ex. 4:19a The Lord <b>said</b> to Moses.
Matt. 2:20 “Get up, take the child and his mother, and <b>go to the land of Israel</b> , for those who were <b>seeking the child’s life are dead</b> .” 21 Then Joseph got up, <b>took the child and his mother</b> , and <b>went to the land of Israel</b> .	Ex. 4:19b “Go back to Egypt; for all those who were <b>seeking your life are dead</b> .” 20 So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a <u>donkey</u> and <b>went back to the land of Egypt</b> .

		Genealogy	1:1-17	Citations
A		Joseph’s dream Jesus’ birth	1:18-25	Isaiah 7:14
	B	The Magi	2:1-12	Micah 5:1, 3 2 Sam 5:2
C		Joseph’s dream Flight into Egypt	2:13-15	Hos 11:1
	D	The holy innocents	2:16-18	Jer 31:15
E		Joseph’s dream Return from Egypt	2:19-23	?Jdg 13:5-7 ?Is 11:1

Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called my son.

- In brief: Jesus recapitulates, fulfils and exceeds the role of Moses in ancient Israel.
- Next example: the Temptation stories

**Matthew 4:1-11**

**Matthew 4:1** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. **2** He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. **3** The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

**4** But he answered, “It is written,  
‘One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

**Matthew 4:5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,

**6** saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,  
‘He will command his angels concerning you,’  
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

**Matthew 4:7** Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

**Matthew 4:8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, **9** and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

**10** Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written,  
‘Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.’”

**Matthew 4:11** Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

- Jesus’ biblical citations come from Deuteronomy 6-8.
- They come from that part of the Pentateuch, where the people of Israel are about to enter the promised land after forty years in the desert.
- Moses reflects on their experience of temptation and failure during that very period.
- **Deuteronomy 8:3** He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that **one does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.**
- **Deuteronomy 6:16** “Do not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.
- **Deuteronomy 6:13** The Lord your God you shall fear, him you shall serve, and by his name alone you shall swear.
- The words reflect the Moses tradition: “led”, “forty”, “wilderness”, “son of God” (meaning Israel), and “test”.
- More precisely: Jesus recapitulates the temptations of Israel in the desert:
  1. Hunger (Exodus 16; the manna)
  2. Testing God (Exodus 17; water from the rock)
  3. Idolatry (Exodus 32; the golden calf)
- Q version of the Temptation story (found also in Luke).
- Pre-Matthean tradition, therefore.
- Matthew anticipates in 2:15 (Hosea 11:1)
- Matthew redacts to make the Moses echoes stronger.

**Matthew 4:1** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. **2** He fasted **forty days and forty nights**, and afterward he was famished.

**Luke 4:1** Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, **2** where for **forty days** he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished.

- Genesis 7:4, 12 (Noah's flood; x2)
- Exodus 24:18 Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. (Moses; x6)
- 1 Kings 18:8 (Elijah; x1)

**Exodus 24:18** Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for **forty days and forty nights**.

**Exodus 34:28** He was there with the Lord **forty days and forty nights**; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

**Deuteronomy 9:11** At the end of **forty days and forty nights** the Lord gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant.

**Deuteronomy 9:18** Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, **forty days and forty nights**; I neither ate bread nor drank water because of all the sin you had committed, provoking the Lord by doing what was evil in his sight.

**Deuteronomy 9:25** "Throughout the **forty days and forty nights** that I lay prostrate before the Lord when the Lord intended to destroy you,

**Deuteronomy 10:10** "I stayed on the mountain **forty days and forty nights**, as I had done the first time. And once again the Lord listened to me. The Lord was unwilling to destroy you.

**Matthew 4:8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,

**Luke 4:5** Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

**Matthew 4:8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him (*kai deiknysin autō*) all the kingdoms (*pasas tas basilieas*) of the world and their glory, **9** and he said to him, "All these I will give you (*tauta panta dōsō*), if you will fall down and worship me."

**Deuteronomy 34:1** Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the Lord showed him (*kai edeixen autō*) the whole land (*pasan tēn gēn*): Gilead as far as Dan, **2** all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, **3** the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. **4** The Lord said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'I will give it (*dōsō autēn*) to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

Pattern:

- A supernatural figure (God / Satan)
- Shows to the hero (Moses / Jesus)
- The entirety of a realm
- But the hero does not enter or inherit it
- I.e. Matthew's redaction of "a very high mountain" echoes another Moses story.

- In brief: Jesus recapitulates, fulfils and exceeds the role of Moses in ancient Israel.
- More precisely: Jesus recapitulates the temptations of Israel in the desert:
  1. Hunger (Exodus 16; the manna)
  2. Testing God (Exodus 17; water from the rock)
  3. Idolatry (Exodus 32; the golden calf)
- Next example: the Great Thanksgiving

**Matthew 11:25-30**

**Matthew 11:25** At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; **26** yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. **27** All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and

anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

**Matthew 11:28** "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

- A Q saying, found also in Luke.
- It is, therefore, pre-Matthean and may even go back to Jesus himself.
- Theme: knowing and being known in relation to God.
- To be read in light of three Old Testament passages.

**Exodus 33:11** Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then he would return to the camp, but his young assistant, Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the tent.

**Exodus 33:12** Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favour in my sight.' **13** Now if I have found favour in your sight, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider, too, that this nation is your people." **14** He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." **15** And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not bring us up from here. **16** For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth."

**Exodus 33:17** The Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have asked, for you have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name." **18** Moses said, "Please show me your glory." **19** And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord,' and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. **20** But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live." **21** And the Lord continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, **22** 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; **23** then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

**Numbers 12:1** While they were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had indeed married a Cushite woman), **2** and they said, "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?"

And the Lord heard it. **3** Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth. **4** Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out. **5** Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.

**6** And he said, "Hear my words:

When there are prophets among you,  
I the Lord make myself known to them in visions;  
I speak to them in dreams.

**7** Not so with my servant Moses;  
he is faithful in all my house.

**8** With him I speak face to face—clearly, not in riddles,

and he beholds the form of the Lord.

“Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

**Deuteronomy 34:9** Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him, and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses.

**Deuteronomy 34:10** Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. **11** He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, **12** and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

- All three passages are thematically related.
- Theme: the mutual knowledge between Moses and God.
- In biblical and Jewish tradition, such passages gave rise to speculation about seeing God.
- Our passage bestows on Jesus several several attributes that Jewish tradition already bestowed on Moses.

- Authority: Moses in Exodus 33-34
- Knowledge: Moses in Deuteronomy 34
- Prayer: Moses in Exodus 33:12-13
- Rest: Moses in Exodus 33:14
- Meekness: Moses in Numbers 12:3
- Seeing God: Moses in Exodus 33:20
- Revelation: Moses in later tradition: encyclopaedic knowledge
- Yoke: Moses in the Torah
- [Son/Father: Moses in Exodus 33:12-13 (Moses / God)]

- In brief: Jesus is shown in the garb of Moses
- More precisely: Moses had an intimate, face to face relationship with God.
- Jesus' intimacy with God surpasses that of Moses and likewise his revelation is greater.

#### What has Matthew achieved?

- Biblical tradition assimilated Moses to great figures.
  - Pre-Matthean tradition already did this.
  - Matthew redacts and accentuates the Moses traits.
  - E.g. Matthew 1-2, 4 and 11, as we just saw.
  - There is much more: e.g. Matthew 28:16-20
- Matthew's community was originally fully within Judaism, most likely in Antioch on the Orontes.
  - After the destruction the Holy City and the Temple, such “co-habitation” became increasingly difficult.
  - Eventually, a split occurred and the group separated from the mother religion.
- Sociologically, the community is a sect.
    1. A break-away group.
    2. Disappointed with and angry towards the parent group.
    3. Claims to be what the parent group has failed to be in not recognising Jesus as the Messiah.
    4. Takes possession of the major figures, symbols and stories and appropriates them for itself.
      - Massive illustration: the figure of Moses.
      - The intended audience would have “heard” all of this.
- And what about us?
    1. Our roots lie firmly in Judaism.

2. To read the NT, it is essential to read the OT.
3. For Matthew, Jesus fulfils and exceeds the Mosaic type: leader and king, saviour and deliverer, teacher and revealer, intercessor and suffering prophet.
4. Hence, continuity and discontinuity, tradition and innovation, even today.

Conversation