

# There Has Not Arisen A Prophet Since Like Moses

---

Transfiguration

Pastor Josh Frazee

Deut. 34:1-12

---

Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today is Transfiguration Sunday. We heard about Jesus changing before the face of those three chosen apostles up on the Mount. As Jesus was up there with them, and before the apostles even really knew what was happening, Jesus was met with two great men from history: Moses and Elijah.

If you recall your Biblical history, you know that both of these men had unique ways of exiting this world. Elijah was taken up in the chariot of fire; he was in Elisha's vision, and then he was not. Moses, on the other hand, did die; but God Himself buried him.

You may have heard before that the reason these two men were the ones to meet with Jesus was to represent the Law and the Prophets, Moses for the Law, and Elijah for the Prophets.

Earlier we heard about Moses, but we did not hear about Elijah; so this morning we'll explore the significance of our Old Testament text—why it may have been chosen for this Sunday.

## Verse 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 all the land...And the Lord said to him, 'This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, "I will give it to your offspring." I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.'"

Now if you do not recall your Biblical history, you would not remember the reason why Moses was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Back in their wandering through the wilderness, the Israelites had grown thirsty. Not recalling the many things that the Lord had done for them since delivering them out of Egypt through the Red Sea and drowning Pharaoh, they complained to Moses and Aaron, accusing them once more of bringing them out into the wilderness to die. Moses and Aaron again went to the Lord about the subject.

"(A)nd the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and to their cattle.' And Moses took the staff from before the Lord, as he commanded him." Yet what Moses said and did were not what God had commanded him. "(H)e said to them, 'Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?' And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.'"

God is indeed merciful and forgiving, but sin has consequences. In the case of Moses striking the rock twice when he had been told to speak to it, and of saying "shall we bring water," Moses had not kept God as the holy leader of the Israelites. God forgave him, and even allowed him to see the land which the people would be entering, but God did not permit him to enter it because of his sin.

To be clear, all sin is evil before God. The sin of one of God's leaders is just as bad as the sin of one of God's people. There is forgiveness for each, but there may well be punishment as well. That is why there are those pastors who are sent in to speak with inmates on death row. Those prisoners can be forgiven, but they will still face their punishment. After all, the criminal hung to die next to Jesus was not taken down once he asked Jesus to remember him; but he was given Jesus' assurance he would be with Him in Paradise.

## Verse 2

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day. Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was undimmed, and his vigor unabated. And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended."

So why did the people weep and mourn? Because Moses, like the Law and Prophets, had pointed them to the coming Christ. Moses had showed the people the undeserved mercy of God when he had first struck a rock with his staff so that the people could drink back in the writings of Exodus. Moses had led the people of God out of Egypt through the Red Sea, foreshadowing the baptism we received and desire for our children and grandchildren to receive—a baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son—that is, Jesus, the Christ to come—and of the Holy Spirit. Moses had made God's Word plain to the people, both when they wanted to hear it and when they did not.

And again, God buried Moses Himself. Only so many people of the Old Testament left this world in such unique ways. There were certainly a couple more than just Moses and Elijah, yet they were the two chosen to represent the Law and the Prophets with Jesus up on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was not because they were without sin—sin's the very reason was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Yet in our Gospel text Moses was permitted to see Jesus before He would begin His journey to Calvary.

## Verse 3

"Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel."

Moses did, indeed, die at the end of Deuteronomy, having lived one hundred twenty years. He was succeeded by Joshua the son of Nun. And Moses was allowed to see Jesus before the redemption of the world.

In somewhat of a foretaste of what would come, Jesus' apostles saw Moses, with Elijah, in their bodies speaking to the Lord Jesus. At the end of time, we also will have our bodies again. The Scriptures tell us that the dead will be raised, and we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye; and we, with our own eyes, and not someone else's, will see the Lord. Then we shall enter the ultimate Promised Land—the new heavens and new earth. Only in this Promised Land, we shall not still be on the earth because this earth will have been destroyed. We will not still sin because sin will have been wiped out. But we will have bodies again, because God created us to be alive, both spiritually and physically.

That is the end for which Jesus would go on from meeting Moses and Elijah with His apostles. He would go on to the cross—willingly. Bodily. To suffer the pains which we all rightly deserved. He would endure them all, for you and for me. And then He will pronounce those great words: "It is finished." Your salvation is finished in Jesus, His conception, life, death, and resurrection. Right now we are only heading toward that great end, but we know it to be true. We know it's true because both the Old and the New Testaments, the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it, just as they did in the Old Testament, and just as they did in the New Testament, standing with the Lord, speaking with Him about His departure, which would be for your sake and for mine. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

