

# Why Bother With Moses?

*Genesis*

By Don Green

sermonaudio.com

**Preached on:** Tuesday, September 16, 2014

## **Truth Community Fellowship**

Creation Museum

2800 Bullittsburg Church Road

Petersburg, KY 41080

**Website:** [truthcommunitychurch.org](http://truthcommunitychurch.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm](http://www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm)

We're going to take a break of sorts from our series on the Psalms. We have done Psalms 1 through 15 and I will go back to the Psalms, you can count on that. It's my intention to teach through them consecutively if the Lord gives me that much breath and a continued audience to listen and I may do it even if I lose an audience, I don't know. But what I want to do and this has been on my heart for quite some time to do, I want to step back from the Psalms and from the very personal things that we see in the Psalms about trusting in trials and how God works through our trials and all of that and I want to step back and look at something that is perhaps even more foundational, more fundamental to our understanding of Scripture, to understand the foundation upon which the Bible is built. Tonight we're going to introduce a survey study of the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch: Genesis through Deuteronomy which were first written by Moses some 3,500 years ago. That might seem like perhaps a little bit of an obscure section of Scripture to study and the question might well be asked, "Why would you do that? Why bother with Moses? What does that have to do with real life?" If you think about it, there are a lot of reasons not to do it; the sheer volume of material is daunting. You look at that big thick section of the initial part of your Bible, 187 chapters in our English Bibles. A lot of it is unfamiliar and it's often obscure. We can get bogged down in all of the different details and regulations about sacrifices and things like that. So I would understand if you question what this had to do with real life or how that is related to the Gospel or anything like that. The question is, "Why bother with Moses 3,500 years after the fact?"

Well, there are two ways that I want to answer that: one is just on a very personal level. When I did an extended, sort of an extended study, multiple, multiple week study during my training for ministry out of the initial books of the Bible and as I saw the things that were contained within those first five books, it set in my heart back then that was some years ago, a long time ago, I said, "I want to teach on these books of the Bible if I have the opportunity." I saw that it was important and I wanted the opportunity to teach it. So on one very superficial level, I am kind of fulfilling a promise that I made to myself some years ago when I first was exposed to this at a meaningful level. That's one reason why I want to bother with Moses with you in the coming weeks. It will be a brief survey. It will be just a few weeks. We're certainly not going to go verse-by-verse or chapter-by-chapter; that's simply not feasible. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't attempt to learn something from these books. For you the question is because I know it's not important

what I was thinking years ago, here is why you should be ready, willing and desiring to bother with Moses: the Bible is a transcendent book. We need to study the Bible on its own terms, not merely how we superficially think at first it may be related to our current lives. We might mistakenly superficially think that the first five books of the Bible aren't important to us today in the 21st century. That would be a very serious mistake for us to make. It would be a crippling mistake to make spiritually. It would hinder your ability to understand not only the Old Testament but as you'll see, it would hinder your ability to understand the New Testament to neglect the first five books of the Bible, those five books written by Moses. But beyond that, there is something even more foundational. Those of you that have been around know that our tagline, our motto at Truth Community is: teaching God's people God's word. We believe that all of God's word is important, that all of God's word is inspired and profitable and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. And I think that there is an aspect of humility that comes in saying, "Okay, let's submit ourselves to take a look at these first five books of the Bible and see what they have to say and to understand that they are intrinsically worthy of our attention simply because they come from God even if they have no relevance to our daily life." Now, you'll find that they are relevant to our daily life; they are completely relevant to framing the way that we view all of our existence. But even if it didn't, the mere fact that it comes from God would make it worthwhile.

Now, there is a writer from a few decades ago named Jay Sidlow Baxter. Not all of his writings I would recommend but he said something on this point that I thought is very important and I wanted to quote him at a little bit of length. This is designed to help us come to the Scriptures in their entirety with the right attitude and with the right frame of mind. He said and I quote, "With all too many Christians today the tendency is to read the Bible just to pick up a few good points or suggestions for addressing meetings or preparing sermons, or to pick out a few nice bits to help with the Christian life. This is bad. It engenders superficiality both mentally and spiritually." Continuing the quotation he says, "The word of God was never meant merely for these hurried consultations. We need to study and to know the written word of God as a whole, for such study and knowledge gives depth and richness and fullness to all our public ministry, and stabilizes our whole Christian experience." In other words, we don't simply approach the Scripture with the mindset day-by-day, "What can I get out of this? How is this relevant to me?" That puts us at the interpretive center. It puts us at the core of what Scripture is supposed to be about. What we need to understand is that we want to see Scripture from the way that God views the core of the Bible and start to think about the Bible and to see its unfolding message from the perspective that God gave it and delivered it over the course of some 1,500 years or so.

So that's what we are trying to do today and in the weeks to come. We're going to look at the Scriptures from God's perspective. Here's what I want you to see to wrap up this introductory comment, I would say it this way: God intends for us to understand our salvation in the context of his full revelation, from the totality of the Scripture, not simply the parts which we pick and choose. We need to understand his word on his terms in the way that he has given it, not just in that which immediately suits our fancy. Now, with one exception in the room, perhaps two exceptions in the room, you may not give much

thought to the quality of the physical foundation of your home or the office building in which you work as you enter it day-by-day but the architect did. Everything depends upon the foundation. Everything rests upon the foundation. The foundation supports everything which you see visibly even though it is below the surface. Well, that's kind of how I want you to think about what we are doing here. We are looking at the foundation of the Scriptures in what we are going to study in the weeks to come and also we're going to see how much everything that we believe and our confidence in Christ himself is rooted in these first five books of the Bible.

So with that justification for what we are doing, let me start with this. I am going to give you three points. It seems like that's about all I'm capable of doing. I can't count beyond three and I can't count less than three so every message it seems has three points. That's all right. It gives you a pattern. It gives you something that you can expect and we can be confident and rest in the familiarity of the routine, I guess. I don't know. But first of all, let's just give point to it this way: introducing the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch, which is a fancy word describing the first five books of the Bible. That's what we're going to look at here. Introducing the Pentateuch. The first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They were all written by Moses. The word "Pentateuch" that is used to describe them is a word that means "a five volumed book." A five volumed book. The Jews referred to it as "Torah," a word that means "law or teaching or instruction." Now, stay with me on this. I promise you that you are going to be glad that you are here by the end of the evening. We think about Genesis through Deuteronomy in our English minds, we tend to think of them as five separate books. The truth of the matter is that Scripture treats them as a single unit, Genesis through Deuteronomy being a single book of Moses. They should be understood together. They should be interpreted together. They flow one into the other as we'll see in the weeks to come.

Just to give us a New Testament verse to kind of start on that theme, please turn to the book of Galatians, chapter 3. We're here to study the Bible and we might as well open the Bible if we're going to do that. Galatians 3:10. I may come back to this passage later on but I want you to see that this passage from the Apostle Paul talks about the first five books of the Bible as in the singular. He says in Galatians 3:10, "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law,'" singular. He's quoting from Deuteronomy and he says, "the book of the Law, to perform them." now, he calls it the book of the law quoting from Deuteronomy when he had just been referring to Abraham whose life is discussed in the book of Genesis there in verse 9. He goes on in verse 11, "Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.'" Then he says, "the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,' in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Now, there is a whole lot in that passage. All I'm wanting you to see is that he quotes Abraham and Deuteronomy in the

same passage in referring to the book, singular, of the law. It is a single look from the understanding of Scripture.

Now, the Bible itself, I won't go through all these passages with you, I've got close to two dozen Scriptures listed here but Scripture itself calls the Pentateuch, calls the Torah, by many different names. It calls it the law. Scripture calls it the book of the law. It calls it the book of the law of Moses. It calls it the book of Moses. The law of Moses. The law of the Lord. The law of God. The book of the law of God. The book of the law of the Lord. All of those being singular references. All of it referring to all of that vast material collectively as a single unit. So the law, Torah, the Pentateuch, we are using those terms interchangeably here tonight. Now, again, this is by way of introduction and we're almost done with this part of what we're studying tonight. We, you and I as English speakers, when we think of the law, we think of the word "law," we think about it in terms of a command, something that you must do or something that prohibits a particular kind of conduct. But when Scripture talks about the law in reference to the whole Pentateuch, it is using it in a broader sense than that. When you read about the law being discussed in Scripture, you need to understand that it is talking about more than just the Ten Commandments, more than just the laws that God gave Israel to live by. It's talking about all of the content of the first five books of our English Bible which includes a lot of narrative history: the stories of the lives of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses and on it goes. So when we talk about the law, we're talking about more than just commands, we're talking about the total content which has a lot of different genres of literature contained in it.

So that's a little bit of an introduction to the Pentateuch. We should think about it as a comprehensive unit that has a lot of different types of instruction contained in it: some of it narrative history; some of it poetry; a lot of it commands and prohibitions. But what you're going to see is that in this opening five volumed book with 187 chapters in English, you find the foundation to the rest of the Bible and I know that you are here because you love the word of God. I know that you are here because you have a heart hunger to understand Scripture. You have a desire to know this book that has changed your life. There is no other reason for you to be here. There is no other motivation to come to a meeting like this week after week except for the fact that you have a desire to understand the Scriptures. Well, all I want you to see tonight is that that desire that you have for God's word ultimately leads you back to the first five books of the Bible and therefore, there is always a connection, there is always a therefore: therefore it is worth our time, it is important and it is something that we should desire to do, to see this study play out over the next few weeks in the life of our congregation.

Now, with all of that introduction in place, this is where I think it gets really fascinating and you start to see things in Scripture that maybe you hadn't seen before. I know that when I first saw them it just jumped off the page at me and so many things made so much sense and you saw that the Scriptures were not isolated books that were unrelated to each other, that there was a divine mind that wove these 66 books of the Bible in our English text, that wove these books of the Bible together and they are integrated in a way and locked together in a way that is not readily noticeable by a casual reader and I want you

to be more than a casual reader of Scripture. I want you to see how these things play out. I want you to see how strategic what we're studying is about to be. So for the second point tonight, we're going to see that the Pentateuch is the foundation of the entire Old Testament. It's the foundation of the entire Old Testament in a way that may surprise you.

Now, how should we proceed here? Let's think about it this way: there were different offices that were held in the Old Testament over the course of time. There were priests; they were prophets; they were kings. Our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled all of those offices in his one person: he is prophet, priest and king. But in the Old Testament, those offices were divided up amongst different men. What you're going to find and what we're about to see is that the Old Testament was at the core of all of that. I'm not sure that I got the reference to the kings into my notes here but that's okay, we'll just go with whatever we find here. But what I want you to see first of all is that God commanded the priests to teach Israel out of this book. Turn to the book of Leviticus. Those priests who stood at the altar with sacrifices had the responsibility to teach the people of Israel out of the book of the law, out of the book of Moses. They were responsible to communicate and instruct the entire nation out of the revealed law of God. Leviticus 10:8, "The LORD then spoke to Aaron, saying, 'Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die - it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations - and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean,'" watch this, verse 11, "'and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.'" The priests were responsible to teach the people the commandments that God had given through Moses. That's all I want you to see out of this. Do you see how simple this is? The priests were responsible to teach Israel out of this book.

Now, the priest were often unfaithful to the task but God always emphasized the priority of the law of Moses as you see the Old Testament unfold and so the priests were to teach the people and that's found right in the middle of Torah. Now, at the start of the historical books in your Bible. Turn to Joshua. At the start of the historical books, the books that talk about the conquest of the land and everything that followed after Moses had led the people up to the brink of the land and then passed from the scene and Joshua carried them into the Promised Land. At the start of the historical books, Joshua through Esther in your English Bibles. At the start of the historical books when Joshua took the mantle of leadership after Moses' death, the law was the cornerstone of what he was to do. Look at Joshua 1:6. God speaks to Joshua. Moses is now dead and God says to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them." Well, he had sworn all of that in the first five books of the Bible. He goes on to say, verse 7, "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go." Verse 8, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." Let's stop there for a minute and just realize something really important. You can randomly pick three verses out of the Bible out of however many hundreds of chapters there are in the Old and New

Testament, you can pick any three verses out of the Bible but there are times where you need to realize that you are at a pivot point; you are at a hinge; you are at a very crucial transition in the Scriptures and Joshua chapter 1 is one of those crucial transitions. The nation of Israel is about to embark into the land that God promised to them and the whole of redemptive history is going to take a step forward now with their entrance into the Promised Land. Now, here's what you need to think about, here's how you need to be strategic in your thinking and understanding: at the very start of that critical historical transition that is taking place, God speaks to the leader of the people and he says, "You put your mind in this law and you keep it there. Day and night, meditate right here." And so at the very start of the historical books, you see the cornerstone being laid for everything that follows and that cornerstone is the revelation that God gave to Moses in what we now know as the first five books of the Bible. That was the very starting point. It was the cornerstone. It was the foundation. Everything followed from that. All of Joshua's leadership was to be informed and instructed by his meditation on God's word which at that time consisted of those five books.

Now, flashing forward. Go to the book of Psalms, if you would. Go to the books of Psalms. You see, we ended up in the Psalms anyway tonight. How about that? Just not Psalm 16. In the poetic books of the Bible: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, in the poetic books of the Bible you find this same foundation. You find that the Psalms are built on this very foundation. Look at Psalm 1. Again, we've talked about the introductory nature of the Psalms, how Psalm 1 lays the foundation for all of the Psalms that follow and that's very good and right that we talked about that. But here tonight what I want you to see is that the Psalms link their content back to Moses, that that is the connecting point. That is the link that God lays out at the very start of the worship manual of Israel. Look at Psalm 1:1, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night." There, once again, you have it. You have this cornerstone statement at a crucial transitional point in the Bible, pointing back to the revealed law of God. So you see the Psalms are built on this foundation and it is repeated often. Look at Psalm 19:7, "The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." Right there in Psalm 19 in a discussion of general and special revelation, the law of God, the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, are put right at the center of it. Now go over to Psalm 119, the longest Psalm, the longest chapter in the Bible, 176 verses in a Hebrew acrostic pattern all explaining and emphasizing and exhorting us to appreciate the significance of the law of God. Psalm 119:1, "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart," and then 174 verses follow that are simply expanding, explaining, echoing that same theme.

So let's stop and just see what we've seen, this foundation of the Old Testament. The priests are talking about the law of God. The history books are talking about the law of God built on that cornerstone. The poetic books, the Psalms, start with that emphasis on the law of God. And the prophets, in the ministry of the prophets, we see a key critical issue related to the law of God. Turn to 2 Kings, you'll have to go to left in your Bibles. 2

Kings 17. I realize that we are flying fast at 30,000 feet here. That's okay. If you take a jet, you get there quicker. You don't see all the detail but you get to where you need to be. Now, here in 2 Kings 17, we are jumping into the context where the nation of Assyria has carried the nation of Israel off into exile. We started in Joshua in a sense and saw the promise of blessing on the nation if it's rooted in the foundation of God's law. Multiple centuries have passed by in the intervening time, about 700 years speaking in round numbers, 700 years have now gone by. Israel is not in a position of blessing, they are in a position of discipline and judgment from God and we see here in 2 Kings 17 the explanation for why that is. 2 Kings 17:6, "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." Now, watch this in verse 7, "Now this came about," why did this happen? Why is it that the people of God are under judgment? Why is it that they are carried off into exile instead of enjoying the promised blessings of the land that God gave to them in a supernatural way? Why? What happened in the intervening time? What went wrong? Something is greatly amiss. Something is out of order here. Why is that? Verse 7, here the writer of 2 Kings is explaining for us and helping us to understand why this sad turn of events came to pass. In verse 7 he says, "Now this came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel." Watch this right here, he's talking about what happened in Exodus. He's talking about that they forgot. They sinned against the God who had delivered them from Egypt. Well, that deliverance took place in the book of Exodus and they walked and they strayed and they abandoned the very law that had been given to them. Drop down to verse 12, "They served idols, concerning which the LORD had said to them, 'You shall not do this thing.'" Now watch this in verse 13 for our purposes for tonight. We are seeing whole sections of Scripture, we are seeing centuries of Israel's history, redemptive history, being lined up and fitted together around a common theme. Verse 12, "They served idols, concerning which the LORD had said to them, 'You shall not do this thing.' Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and every seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers.'" He said, "Come back to the law of God. Come back to what I revealed to you. Come back to what I commanded you from the very beginning," and yet they wouldn't have it and so there were consequences. Vast, unspeakable consequences. They lost their land. They didn't in a sense lose their nation, they didn't disappear as a people is what I mean by that but all of the promised blessing, they forfeited because they turned away from the law of God. And Moses had spoken, God sent prophets to call them back and they consistently, stubbornly refused to listen. They sinned. They went on their own way. They forgot about it all and there were consequences and as you read through the whole sweep of the historical books which you haven't done, I encourage you to do, to be someone who reads the Bible cover-to-cover at least once in your life if not multiple times throughout the breath that the Lord gives you, as you read through the sweep of these historical books, you see that it starts with the law of God, they deviate from it, they go astray and God disciplines them and brings them right back to the point where it started saying, "You did not listen to my law. That's why this has happened."

Now, for you and me today, that's just making one really simple point. I'm just making one simple point here tonight and that's to say: wow, that must be important. That must matter. A nation lost its land. God's chosen people lost its land, was carried off into foreign exile because they neglected that law. Now, after the exile, reform came in response to the law. Turn to Nehemiah 8. This is about 270 years later. Some of the people have returned to the land. Ezra, who may be one of the great unsung heroes of the Old Testament, the people have returned to the land, they are greatly diminished and they are small but Ezra is exhorting them, he is bringing them back and helping them to reestablish in the land and look what he does. Look what he turns to. Nehemiah 8:1, "And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel." Finally. Finally, we're getting back to where we were supposed to be. It's about 1,000 years after Moses wrote it. 1,000 years, can you imagine that? It's easy to lose a sense of time as you're dealing with the Bible, the sense of the scope of time. 1,000 ago to us would put us in the year 1014, 500 years before the Reformation. This is 1,000 years later that Ezra is reading this after Moses wrote it down in response to the work of God. Nehemiah 8:2, "Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law." This was the starting point, the cornerstone of their reform once they got back to the land after they had been away in exile.

So let's step back. Again, I'm just wanting you to see why this is important, that I haven't gone bonkers in wanting to study this with you for a few weeks. The cornerstone of our English Bible, of the Hebrew Bible for that matter, is these five books, the Pentateuch. You see lined up against that cornerstone the historical books in Joshua. In the poetic books, in the worship books, you see the Psalms lining up square with that same measuring line. You see the priests teaching out of the law, at least they're supposed to. You see the prophets exhorting the people to it. The whole point: this is woven throughout the entire Old Testament. You can't get away from it. And here's the thing, if we want to be people of God's word, if we want to know God and we want to know his word and the Old Testament is such a major part of that, then somehow, somewhere, someplace, we need to pay a little bit of attention at least to the first five books of the Bible and have a sense of what they are about because everything is intersecting with them. Historically, Israel rose and fell in response to this revelation. Biblically speaking here in the 21st century, the Old Testament presupposes familiarity with this law. Okay, that's point number two.

Now I'm going to adopt the posture of a skeptic, somebody who says, "I'm not convinced that it's all that important. I am a New Testament man. After all, we're under the new covenant and therefore we need to focus on the New Testament." Well, that's true, we do need to focus on the New Testament. That's why we're teaching it verse-by-verse on our Sunday services but the New Testament highlights this book of Moses as well. This book



of Moses is not only the foundation of the Old Testament, it is not too much to say that it is also the foundation of the New Testament and those of us that love Christ should naturally have an interest in this book as well because ultimately you're not going to have a very mature understanding of the New Testament unless you somehow immerse your mind in the first five books of the Bible. Let me say it this way, I may repeat myself at the end of the message, I'm skipping ahead in my notes here, here's how I think about it, here's how I would encourage you to think about it too: it is a wonderful blessing from God to be a Christian, right? We love Christ. It is good to be saved. It is good to have our sins forgiven. It is good to know that he is going to receive us into heaven when we die. We love Christ and it's just so good to know him and when we share the Gospel with people who have never heard, we want to make it simple and clear and direct so that they can understand and also believe in Christ and that isn't going to involve taking them through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy in our first evangelistic encounter with them. Fair enough. But here's the thing for you and me as Christians, here's the way that we should think about it: we should want to understand more than the bare minimum that is necessary in order to be saved. We should want to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ like 2 Peter 3:18 says. We should understand as Romans 15 says that what was written in former times was written for our instruction so that by the encouragement of Scripture, we might have hope. We should want from the mindset of 2 Timothy 3 to understand that all of the Scriptures are inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequately equipped for every good work. You see, we want more than just the bare minimum. If you go to a fancy dinner, you want more than the appetizers. You're saying, "Let's get to the steak. Let's get to the dessert. Let's get to the full menu here. Don't just give me the finger food. I want the whole thing." Well, in a similar way that's how we should think about the Bible and in particular that's how we should think about the first five books of the Bible.

What you're going to see and what we're going to share here in the next few minutes is that the Torah, the Old Testament, the first five books of the Bible are foundational to the New Testament as well. This is point number three. Turn to the book of Matthew 1:1. You can't get into the second verse of the New Testament without confronting the book of Moses. Matthew 1:1. For all of us who love the Lord Jesus Christ, it starts right here, "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah." Imagine yourself reading this for the first time. You've never seen a Bible before and you're seeing this for the first time. "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Who are they? Verse 2, "Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers." At the very start of the very first Gospel which tells about the life and ministry and work of Jesus Christ, you have a reference to the Pentateuch. You have a reference to the book of Moses. Here's the thing: for those of us who love Christ, for those of us who love the New Testament because it is the very words of eternal life to us, it starts out with a reference fundamentally foundationally referring to the book of Moses. It presupposes that you know what has come in the prior 1,500 years. It presupposes that.

And it's not just Matthew, look at the book of Luke, chapter 1. The angel has told Mary that she would bear Christ in her womb and Mary is now rejoicing in Luke 1:46, "And Mary said: 'My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.'" I won't comment on that. Simply to say, Mary is rejoicing in God. Verse 48, "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name." Now, notice where Mary is going. Notice, this is the first chapter of Luke. This is the first chapter. Everything is flowing out, chapters 2 through 24, flowing out of this. And what does Mary say? Verse 54, "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever." That hits us right in the solar plexus. That is so powerful to realize that she has just been told by an angel that the Lord was going to come through her womb and here she is saying, "This is an expression of God's faithfulness to his people dating all the way back to Abraham." And where do we read about Abraham? In the book of Moses. We can't make sense of what Mary is saying unless we know something about the book of Moses.

That's not all in Luke chapter 1. There comes a point where I should just sit down because I've made the point but there is such an abundance of things to be said about it, I want you to see that this isn't an isolated theme. Look over at Luke 1:67. The father of John the Baptist, Zacharias is now speaking. His tongue has been loosed after a temporary muteness that was imposed upon him during the gestation of his son. Verse 67, "And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant.'" This is good stuff. This man is praising God and he is looking back into prior revelation as he does. Verse 70, "As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old Salvation from our enemies, And from the hand of all who hate us; To show mercy toward our fathers," here it comes, you can feel the momentum building, "And to remember His holy covenant, The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear." How do you make any sense of what Zacharias is saying unless you know something about the book of Moses? And this is introducing the whole foundation of the life of Christ in the book of Luke.

Now, we don't have to leave it there. You might say, "Well, you haven't gotten to Jesus yet." Well, let's get to Jesus then. That's a good point for you to make. John 5:46, we'll see it on the lips of Jesus multiple times now and indeed, there is something about this that is very holy and sacred. There is something about this that brings a sense of holy hush to the room to realize that we are talking about a book that Moses wrote from our perspective 3,500 years ago and that has been preserved through the ages of time through the millennia of time and now we hold it in our hand, that the entire way that God has dealt with revealed religion and dealt with his people is premised on and founded on this book of Moses. That the fortunes of an entire nation of God's people rose and fell on what we're talking about here today, that the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is introduced to the world in the Gospels through the prism, through the lens, of the book of Moses.

That's enough to bring a sense of holy awe to the sacredness of what we're handling, of what we have in front of us here today. Do you see what I mean by contrast to what I said earlier? That this is something that transcends how it applies to our daily lives? That this is more than how to help me through my anxious moments in dealing with this person or that situation? This opens the window, it pulls the curtain back so that we can see something of the greatness of the transcendence of it all. The word of God is spectacularly magnificent. It was magnificent before you and I were born and it is going to be magnificent after you and I are gone. This word of God matters whether you and I ever existed or not. So we have the privilege of coming before it and what I'm asking you to see and to adopt and embrace is that we don't come to this word and say, "What's in it for me?" It has things for us. It points us to Christ. It helps us live. Praise God for that but that is secondary to the recognition of how high and holy and lofty this word is and to see the fullness of how it fits together.

Getting back to Jesus, John 5:46, actually verse 45. You know how this game plays out when I speak. I announce a verse and then I start three verses back. Jesus said as he spoke to a hostile audience verse 44, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?" Verse 45, speaking to the Jews, he says, "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Jesus says to the generation of Jews that are in front of him, "The book of Moses will condemn you." We see now from our Gentile 2,000 year later perspective that he is speaking to us through his word saying, "Look, Moses wrote about me. In those first five books of the Bible Moses was speaking about me." And now here he is from Jesus' perspective in his earthly ministry 1,400, 1,500 years later saying, "Moses wrote about me." Here we are 2,000 years later seeing the same thing. Watch this: in the person of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Lord who dwells within us, those of us who are Christians, we have a direct connection to what was written 3,500 years ago. Moses 3,500 years ago wrote about Christ. Christ now dwells in us through the Holy Spirit and Moses wrote about him. That is astonishingly stupendous and great and so we revere this word.

Jesus goes on in the book of John, John 8:56, pointing back to the book of Moses once again. Jesus speaking to the Jews says in John 8:56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad. So the Jews said to Him," mocking him, "'You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?'" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.'" The divine name. He said, "Abraham saw me."

Now, we'll come back to Christ in just a moment. There is just such an embarrassment of riches on this. The Apostle Paul used Abraham and I'll skip over some of the passages but the Apostle Paul used Abraham to illustrate saving faith. As he's explaining the power of God in salvation, he points back to Abraham as an illustration of what he's talking about. Look at Romans 4. None of this makes sense, nothing that Jesus said in what we read earlier, nothing about what we're going to see in Paul, none of it makes sense if you're not

somehow familiar with the Pentateuch. Romans 4:1, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say?" quoting from Genesis 15, "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." And he says, "There's your illustration. There is your example of what justification by faith looks like. Look back into the book of Moses and look at what happened to Abraham."

Paul uses Abraham again in Galatians 3. We won't turn there for the sake of time but the Apostle Paul as he is describing and teaching on justification by faith, on the nature of salvation, pulls out illustrations from the book of Moses. The first Christian martyr in Acts 7 spent an extended period of time expounding upon the book of Moses before they stoned him to death. When you read in Revelation, chapter 21, about heaven and the New Jerusalem, you see that the gates will have names for the sons of Israel which makes no sense if you don't somehow know something about the book of Moses.

Let's clench this and bring it to a great finale here if we can, at least bring it to the finale and we'll leave it for others to say whether it's a great one or not. But let's end up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's let him describe his own purpose for us. Let's let him speak now. This is ultimately his word and we are ultimately his people. Let's just step out of the way and let Christ speak about how significant the book of Moses is. Go back to the passage that I opened this with tonight, Matthew 5:17. Jesus said and one day in the future in this building from this pulpit I trust that I'll be able to teach on this at length when we go through the Gospel of Matthew together but for now you'll just have to take my word for it. Jesus is avoiding and correcting potential misperceptions about his ministry, people thinking that because he is contradicting the Pharisees that he's contradicting the law of Moses and Jesus is saying, "Don't go that route. Don't make that fundamental mistake. I am contradicting the Pharisees but that doesn't mean that I am contradicting the law of God." He says in Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." Jesus said, Jesus defines his ministry, defines his life, in the context of the law of God and in the context of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. He says, "Don't think that I am standing in opposition to them. Don't think that I'm abolishing them with what I'm teaching or what I'm doing. Just the opposite, I came to fulfill them. To understand my life, you've got to understand the law of God and understand that I'm here to fulfill it, not to contradict it, not to set it aside."

He said something remarkably similar at the end of the Gospel of Luke, at the end of his earthly life. This is after his resurrection, just prior to his ascension. Look at Luke 24:44. Jesus is speaking to his disciples and said to them, "'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Look over at verse 27. I should have introduced this one first when he is speaking to the two men on the road to Emmaus. What was he saying? What was he saying to these disciples? He says, "Then beginning with Moses and with all the

prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." Look, the Old Testament is built on the foundation of Moses. It is woven throughout everything that you read and everything that follows from Joshua through Malachi. The New Testament is built on the foundation of the book of Moses. The life and ministry of Christ is defined by Christ himself in reference to the law of Moses. So all of that stuff over the past 60 minutes simply to answer one simple question: why bother with Moses? We bother with Moses because we love Christ, because we love the word of God and because we desperately want to understand it on its terms. That's why we bother with Moses and I am confident that God will certainly bless us as we do.

*Father, we understand that we're not saved by obedience to the law. We understand that we are lawbreakers, that gathered together in this room are people who have lied, people who have stolen, people who have committed all kinds of transgressions against your law. Father, we know and we don't study the law because we want it to show us what we can do in our own righteousness to be saved, that's not the point. No, what we want to do is we want to understand your word and we realize that that starts with the book of Moses and so we ask you for help and clarity and illumination from the Holy Spirit to help us embrace the study and to pursue it and to profit from it, Father, so that a few weeks from now we would find ourselves with a much more mature understanding of the Bible than what we came into this room with tonight. Help us to that end, Father. Guide us to that which is most important, most appropriate. And Father, bless us as we devote ourselves to that portion of Scripture which Christ himself said found its fulfillment in him which he had to fulfill because nothing in the law, not even the smallest stroke of a letter, could be violated. Lord, we love your word so much. It is our bread. It is our water. It is our food. And so as we eat of it in the days to come, bless us and let us see the progress that we make in your word as we devote ourselves to what you have said. Bless us we pray in Christ's name. Amen.*

You have been listening to Pastor Don Green from Truth Community Church. For more information about our ministry including Pastor Don's blog and our location and service times, please visit us at [truthcommunitychurch.com](http://truthcommunitychurch.com). You will also find Don's sermon library where you can download free messages on many biblical passages and topics. This message is copyrighted by Don Green. All rights reserved.