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Christ and Moses

[Saint John Chrysostom](#)

[Early Church Father](#) and [Doctor of the Church](#)



This excerpt from the Catecheses of St. John Chrysostom (Cat. 3, 24-27: SC 50, 165-167 is used in the Roman Office of Readings for Monday of the 2nd week of Lent with the accompanying biblical reading taken from Exodus 14:10-31, the Israelites crossing of the Red Sea. Here St. John contrasts the Red Sea with baptism, Moses with Christ, showing us that while Old Testament realities point forward to the events of the New Covenant, they cannot begin to equal them. A great example of the spiritual interpretation of Scripture as practiced by the Church Fathers, sometimes known as typology or allegory.

The Israelites witnessed marvels; you also will witness marvels, greater and more splendid than those which accompanied them on their departure from Egypt. You did not see Pharaoh drowned with his armies, but you have seen the devil with his weapons overcome by the waters of baptism. The Israelites passed through the sea; you have passed from death to life. They were delivered from the Egyptians; you have been delivered from the powers of darkness. The Israelites were freed from slavery to a pagan people; you have been freed from the much greater slavery to sin.

Do you need another argument to show that the gifts you have received are greater than theirs? The Israelites could not look on the face of Moses in glory, though he was their fellow servant and kinsman. But you have seen the face of Christ in his glory. Paul cried out: We see the glory of the Lord with faces unveiled.

In those days Christ was present to the Israelites as he followed them, but he is present to us in a much deeper sense. The Lord was with them because of the favor he showed to Moses; now he is with us not simply because of your obedience. After Egypt they dwelt in desert places; after your departure you will dwell in heaven. Their great leader and commander was Moses; we have a new Moses, God himself, as our leader and commander.

What distinguished the first Moses? Moses, Scripture tells us, was more gentle than all who dwelt upon the earth. We can rightly say the same of the new Moses, for there was

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with him the very Spirit of gentleness, united to him in his inmost being. In those days Moses raised his hands to heaven and brought down manna, the bread of angels; the new Moses raises his hands to heaven and gives us the food of eternal life. Moses struck the rock and brought forth streams of water; Christ touches his table, strikes the spiritual rock of the new covenant and draws forth the living water of the Spirit. This rock is like a fountain in the midst of Christ's table. so that on all sides the flocks may draw near to this living spring and refresh themselves in the waters of salvation.

Since this fountain, this source of life, this table surrounds us with untold blessings and fills us with the gifts of the Spirit, let us approach it with sincerity of heart and purity of conscience to receive grace and mercy in our time of need. Grace and mercy be yours from the only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; through him and with him be glory, honor and power to the Father and the life-giving Spirit, now and always and forever. Amen.

St. John Chrysostom, one of the greatest Early Church Fathers of the 5th Century. St. John was a monk who was ordained a priest and ultimately, against his will, selected as Patriarch Archbishop of Constantinople. His call to repentance and moral reform won him the enmity of the nominally Christian Empress who got him deposed on trumped-up charges and exiled. But his preaching inspired the hearts of the people of Constantinople and won him the title "Chrysostom" meaning golden-mouthed. St. John Chrysostom, who died under the harsh conditions of his exile in 409, will always be remembered as one of the greatest of the Early Church Fathers and one of the greatest preachers of all time. His beautiful but always practical bible teaching has earned him the title "Doctor of the Church." For an introduction to the Early Church Fathers, [click here.](#)

The Early Church Fathers

A society characterized by the loss of respect for life, violence, exotic religious cults, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, and even pedophilia. Sound familiar?

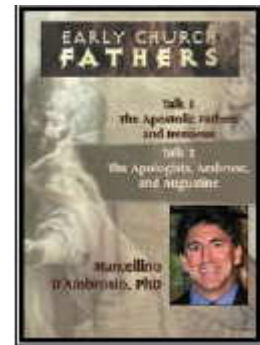
The Early Church Fathers succeeded in bringing a Pagan society to Christ. If we pay attention to what they taught, we will succeed in doing the same for our own de-Christianized society!

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