

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany – January 28, 2018

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 (NIV)

*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. (16) For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die." (17) The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. (18) **I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.** (19) I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. (20) But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."*

In the name of **THE** Prophet, our Lord Jesus, dear friends:

Most grandmas are regarded as being good cooks. It's a compliment to say that something tastes just like grandmas only better.

Well in our text Moses pays a similar complement to Jesus when he says that the Lord will raise up a prophet like him to whom the people are to listen.

God had appointed Moses to reveal his teachings to the Israelites – Moses had not appointed himself nor had the Israelites picked him to be their prophet. As a prophet appointed by God, Moses was highly regarded by the people. Moses is mentioned over 800 times in the Scriptures. He's mentioned over 80 times alone in the NT. That gives us some idea of how highly he was regarded by the Israelites.

And he was also special in God's eyes. The Scriptures tell us that the Lord spoke face to face with Moses when he wanted to give him a message. (cf. Numbers 12:8) At the close of the last of the five books of the OT that the Lord inspired Moses to write, we read: (Deuteronomy 34:10-12 NIV) **Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, (11) who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt--to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. (12) For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.**

We can use our text to draw some comparisons between Moses and Jesus.

Theme: Jesus, a Prophet Like Moses – Only Better

1. Jesus gives the ultimate revelation
2. Jesus provides the ultimate mediation
3. Jesus deserves our ultimate attention

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites.

As I've previously mentioned, the Lord used his prophet Moses to provide us with the first five books of the OT, known as the Pentateuch. Although there are numerous gospel promises recorded in those books, Moses is known as the Law given of Israel. God used him to reveal God's Moral, Civil and Ceremonial Law to his people. Even today we use Moses 10 commandments as a summary of God's will for our lives – to show us

our sin and our need for a Savior as well as to guide us in lives of thanksgiving for the Savior that Moses foretold and the Lord God sent to us.

(John 1:17 NIV) **For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

One of the hymns in our hymnal contrasts the message of Moses and the message of Jesus:

The law commands and makes us know
What duties to our God we owe,
But 'tis the gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do his will.

The law uncovers guilt and sin
And shows how vile our hearts have been;
The gospel only can express
Forgiving love and cleansing grace.

What curses does the law pronounce
Against the one who fails but once!
But in the gospel Christ appears,
Pard'ning the guilt of num'rous years.

The Good News of God's grace, love, forgiveness and cleansing pardon is the ultimate message that Jesus reveals to us. What was revealed by Moses is realized in Christ – and is believed by us!

Jesus himself declares that he has revealed the Father to us – calling us to faith in him and enabling us to become children of the heavenly Father.

(John 17:6-8 NIV) **"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. (7) Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. (8) For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.**

Although Moses is well known as a Prophet and Law Giver he also served in other roles. In addition to serving as a spokesman and messenger to teach, warn and comfort the people, Moses was also a mediator. He stood between the people and God when God handed down his laws at Mount Sinai at the request of the people who were terrified by the presence of their holy God as our text reports.

This is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die." (17) The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. (18) I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.

(Exodus 20:18-19 NIV) **When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance (19) and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."**

The Lord understood the people's request for a mediator of go-between who would shield his people from his holiness. He gave them Moses initially but he also was looking ahead to the future when he would

send his son, Jesus as the ultimate mediator – one like Moses only better. The Apostle Paul reminds us: (1 Timothy 2:5 NIV) **For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.**

No mere human being could ever serve as a perfect mediator between God and us because our sins separate us from God and no human being could ever remove our sins. Even the laws God gave to Moses regarding the worship life of Israel recognized the need for a mediator greater than Moses. Those laws called for the priests to go between God and this people as they offered sacrifices to the Lord. Those lambs of course were visual and graphic reminders that only the Lamb of God – God’s own Son could truly remove the curse of sin and death and provide us with eternal life in the presence of God in heaven.

The writer to the Hebrews points out the superiority of Jesus with these words: (Hebrews 12:22-28 NIV) **But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, (23) to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, (24) to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (25) See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? (26) At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." (27) The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain. (28) Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe...**

In our text, the Lord not only puts his stamp of approval on the words of Moses but also on the words of the one whom God would raise up in his place. Our text declares: **The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.** Then the Lord continues: **I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. (19) I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.**

Jesus gives us the ultimate revelation of God because he is the God-man who came to remove our sins once and for all by sacrificing himself for our sins. Surely, he deserves our ultimate attention for as Peter reminds in Acts 4:12 (NIV) **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”** Surely, it would be the ultimate folly to not pay attention to Jesus – a prophet like Moses only better.

Once again the writer to the Hebrews sharpens the contrast between Moses and Jesus for us: (Hebrews 10:28-29 NIV) **Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (29) How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?**

Jesus reminds us (Mark 16:16 NIV) **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

Dear friends, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." He deserves our ultimate attention. Amen.