

The Great Prophet Foretold By Moses.

Text: Deut 18:10-22

Suggested Hymns:
11, 262, 14, 283, 17

- 1) This Prophet Is To Be Like Moses
- 2) And Yet In Spite Of This Similarity
This Prophet Is Greater Than Moses.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Deuteronomy 18:10–22, ¹⁰ *There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹² For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.*

¹³ *You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴ For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.*

¹⁵ *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’*

¹⁷ *“And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.*

²⁰ *But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ ²¹ And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’— ²² when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing*

which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Scripture says in Romans 15:4, *⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* These were the introductory words of today's Epistle.

Certainly the prophecies of the Old Testament are not without importance. They certainly deserve to be studied carefully, particularly since we can study them in the light of fulfilment. It is foolish and wicked to wish to discard the Old Testament, as some people suggest.

Our text is a prophecy concerning Christ by the most prominent leader of the Old Testament and the mediator of the Old Testament Covenant. His name is Moses. The theme for today is *"The Great Prophet Foretold by Moses."* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. This Prophet Is To Be Like Moses.

Firstly, He is to be like Moses in Divine Authority. Both Moses and Jesus were divinely commissioned. Moses at the end of his life recalled that memorable day forty years ago in the wilderness of Midian when the Lord had appeared to him in the burning bush.¹ The Lord had disclosed to him His secret name **"I AM,"**² and had given Him as a proof of his divine commission the power to work miracles, so that he would be able to convince friends and to confound enemies.

We read in Exodus 4:1-9, *¹ Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'" ² So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." ³ And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.*

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his

hand), ⁵ *“that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”*

⁶ *Furthermore the LORD said to him, “Now put your hand in your bosom.” And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. ⁷ And He said, “Put your hand in your bosom again.” So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.*

⁸ *“Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. ⁹ And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.”*

Christ, like Moses has Divine Authority. Our text says, *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. And ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.* This prophecy was perfectly fulfilled in Christ.

The New Testament emphasises the fact that God sent Christ into the world. We read in Galatians 4:4-5, *⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.³*

An in Luke 4:18, ¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed.*

Like Moses, Jesus had the power to work miracles as we read in Matthew 11:3-5. Two of John’s disciples asked Jesus, *“Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵ The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* His crowning miracle, His own resurrection, is the final and conclusive proof of His divine commission.

Both Moses and Christ had to vindicate, prove, and defend their divine authority over against false prophets and impostors. Moses forbids his people to have any dealings with them.

Our text says, ¹⁰ *There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹² For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.*

These are heathen abominations, but they are still practised in our times. People still listen to witches, the occult, soothsayers, consult with mediums, spiritualists and fortune-tellers.

Christ likewise had to wage unceasing warfare against false prophets. The New Testament repeatedly tells us to be on our guard against them as against ravening wolves. Our text says, ²⁰ *But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ ²¹ And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’*

How shall we recognise false prophets? By their life; does it conform to the Law of God? By their doctrine; does it agree with the Gospel? And a further test is mentioned in the text by which we may know them as impostors, ²² *when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.*

Do not be deceived by false religions such as the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Church of Scientology, New age movement, Transcendental Meditation - just to mention a few. None of their leaders can show that they were divinely commissioned by rising from the dead. Some have repeatedly foretold the exact day of the end of the world, but never came to fulfilment. Their prophecies are not from God.

So, let us rely solely on the Old and New Testaments of the inspired Scriptures. We will continue to sit at the feet of Moses and Christ, of whom we know that they were divinely commissioned.

Secondly, This Prophet is to be like Moses in Bearing a Divine Message.

The chosen people were to be established not only as a nation, but as a Church. They needed a lawgiver. Through Moses they received a complete system of civil, ceremonial, and moral laws.

These laws were not devised by Moses himself in the manner of other lawgivers of whom history tells us. They were given to him by God *“by the direction of angels.”*⁴ Of every one of its injunctions and prohibitions, of the most minute rules and regulations, he could say: *“Thus says the Lord.”*

Yet Moses, contemplating this marvellous, magnificent, and perfect system of the Law, is moved by the Holy Spirit to prophesy the coming of another Prophet, who shall bring an equally divine message, *¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet ... and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.*

But this will not be the same message. This Prophet is not to be another preacher of the Law. A second prophet of the Law was not needed, for Moses had taught the Law fully.

This prophecy can refer only to Christ, for the other prophets, who reiterated and restored the Law, were not equal to, but inferior to Moses in dignity.

See, then, Christ, the second great Prophet, coming with a revelation from God which Moses had not given to men. Not human thoughts, opinions, and conclusions, not uncertain hopes and promises, but a message direct from heaven as we read in John 12:49–50, *⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”*

In Scripture we see Moses prophesying of Christ, and Christ referring back to Moses. Picture to yourselves the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration, when these two met face to face. Moses and Christ, each the representative of a covenant, bearers of Law and Gospel, the whole counsel of God. Do you appreciate the greatness of God’s gift, who has not left us to grope in the dark, but has given us His Word?

We read in Psalm 119:105, ¹⁰⁵ *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.* Do you know the holy will of God? Then do not listen to those who teach for doctrines the commandments of men, but go *“to the Law and to the Testimony”*⁵ as written in Isaiah.

Do you want to learn the gracious will of God? Then do not follow the thoughts of your own heart, but go to Christ with His everlasting Gospel.

2. And Yet In Spite Of This Similarity This Prophet Is Greater Than Moses.

Firstly, this is shown by the difference in their doctrines. Compare these two teachings and study them. One of the worst mistakes any one can make who wants to understand God’s way of salvation is to confuse Law and Gospel.

The Law demands. It was designed to control your whole life, what you are to do, say, and think. It says, *This is right*, do it; and again, *This is wrong*, do not do it. There is no comfort in such commands and orders.

The Gospel gives. It shows that the treasures of the kingdom of God, life and salvation, are not to be earned by our own efforts and works, but that we are to receive them as a free gift of God. Jesus bids you come to Him and receive from His hand grace for grace. Therefore Christ is greater than Moses.

The Law condemns. It reflects the perfect holiness of God and sets it up as a standard for your conduct. We read in Leviticus 19:2, ² *“Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.* Have you in your life, in your attitude, in your actions, lived up to this standard? Have you kept the Law, kept all of it, kept it always, kept it perfectly?

If not, you stand condemned, without any ifs or buts. We read in Deuteronomy 27:26, ²⁶ *‘Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.’* There is no comfort here, but only terror and despair.

How different the message of Christ, the Gospel. The Gospel saves. We read in John 3:16–17, ¹⁶ *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* ¹⁷ *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

But what about your sins? Remember what Jesus said to the paralytic in Matthew 9:2, ² *Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.”*

And we learn in John 1:29, ²⁹ *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

What about the righteousness which you lack? Is not Christ’s name the *Lord our Righteousness*?⁶ There is nothing in the Gospel that is not comfort, hope, and joy. Therefore Christ is greater than Moses.

Even in His dealing with those who reject His Word the Lord shows that the Gospel is greater than the Law. Those who disobeyed the Law were to be punished by the civil government. But not so with the Gospel.

It is to be preached, and its regenerating power is to be brought to bear on the hearts of men. But if they will not accept it, if they stubbornly resist and finally reject it, they are not to be punished by the hands of men. The Lord Himself will deal with them and call them to account. Our text says, ¹⁹ *And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.* The last phrase means “I will call him to account” or “hold him accountable.”

So the message of Christ is sweeter and better than the message of Moses. In fact the Law was intended by God to be preliminary and preparatory, but the Gospel is eternal. We read in Galatians 3:24–25, ²⁴ *Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* ²⁵ *But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

Secondly, this difference has always been recognised by God’s Children.

The children of Israel were told that the Law of Moses was not the final revelation of God. Our text says, *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’* They looked for a gentler and more gracious word.

They did not, and could not, clearly express their wishes, but the Lord knew, ¹⁷ *“And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. We read in Acts 15:10–11, ¹⁰ Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”*

Moses would be the last man to deny the superiority of the great Prophet who would come after him. Moses knew that his covenant would end some day and that the kingdom of Christ would take its place. He knew that he himself would have to be saved by Christ. On the Last Day, when all knees shall bow and all tongues shall confess that Jesus is the Lord, you will find Moses in the forefront of those doing homage to the Saviour of the world.

So, *“Do you appreciate the preciousness of the Gospel?”* Does its sweet message strike a responsive chord in your heart? Do you hunger and thirst for the righteousness which you could not possibly achieve by your own efforts, but which Christ has earned for you and offers to you?

Then believe in Him as your Prophet and Saviour, the only one who can show you the way of salvation. Rejoice, especially during the Advent season, in the fact that He has come, the great Prophet foretold by Moses, has come with His divine message of grace and pardon, and that He still comes to you in His Word and Sacraments. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Exodus 3:1–6

² Exodus 3:13–15

³ See also John 12:45

⁴ Acts 7:53

⁵ Isaiah 8:20

⁶ Jeremiah 23:6