

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Third Sunday in Advent, December 11, 2016**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 66, 139:1, 64, 68, 70.

Lessons: Jeremiah 23:32, Acts 3:13-24, Matthew 7:15-29.

Sermon Text: Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Two weeks ago we talked briefly about Jesus Christ as the great Prophet. What does a prophet do? Well in the Old Testament, God's prophets were anointed to tell people God's Word, especially the good news about the coming Savior. Peter tells us about Christ: ***"this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer."*** Acts 3:18 (NIV)

As the Great Prophet anointed by God, Christ preached God's Word, especially the good news of eternal life while he was on earth. Jesus quotes Isaiah when he says ***"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners."*** Isaiah 61:1 (NIV) And we read that ***"Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him."*** Luke 8:1 (NIV)

Today we step aside from the direct teachings of the small catechism and look at one of the first and most important Old Testament prophets, Moses, and realize that

**GOD WILL SEND A PROPHET LIKE MOSES**

- 1. Moses was one of the first types of Jesus.**
- 2. We must listen to that prophet whom God promises,**
- 3. For that prophet is Jesus the Christ, the very Son of God.**

Moses was a leader as well as a prophet, called by God to lead his chosen people, the descendants of Abraham, out of their slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land. That is a perfect picture or type or symbol of Jesus Christ, who was anointed by his heavenly Father to lead mankind out of the slavery of sin into the promised land of eternal life.

In our text, Moses is reaching the end of his life. In the chapter and verses before our text, God warns his chosen people through Moses, his spokesman, that ***"The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so."*** Deuteronomy 18:14 (NIV)

Because Israel's new homeland was teeming with false prophets and those who practiced what was forbidden by God, where could Israel find reliable information for their lives? The Lord had an immediate answer for their needs as well as a long-term solution for the problem of receiving God's message.

Moses tells them what they are to do. He says, speaking with the authority of God: ***"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers."*** The people recognized that Moses was getting old and would not live forever. Many were wondering who would replace Moses, although Joshua had been recognized as Moses' assistant early in the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

By inspiration of God, Moses described the coming prophet as one who would be ***"like me,"*** one who enjoyed a special relationship with the Lord similar to that enjoyed by Moses. No other Old Testament prophet spoke with the Lord the way Moses did. The Lord said to Aaron and Miriam when they were complaining about

not being God's prophets: ***"When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD."*** Numbers 12:6-8 (NIV)

Moses also promised that this future prophet would come ***"from among your own brothers."*** He would be a fellow Israelite, who could trace his family tree back to one of the sons of Jacob.

When God gave the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, Mount Horeb, we read ***"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 and said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die'".*** (Exodus 20:18-19)

The fear Israel felt at Sinai is the kind of terror people will always feel when they're faced with God's perfect demands and they must reckon with their own sin. Isn't it true that we can't comprehend how fully we've failed to do what God wants us to do till we've tried our hardest and still we've fallen short? After we try over and over to be good but fail every time, we finally arrive at the frightening moment when we turn to God and say, 'If there's any hope for me at all, it has to come from you. I can't do it!'

The Lord emphasized the authority of this coming prophet: ***"I will put my words in his mouth and he will tell them everything I command him."*** Forty years earlier the Lord described a prophet's function to Moses in a similar way. In designating Aaron as Moses' spokesman, the Lord said to Moses, ***"You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him."*** Exodus 4:15-16 (NIV) The Lord emphasized this coming prophet's authority when he said, ***"If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account."***

***"You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?' 'If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.'"*** Deuteronomy 18:21-22.

Moses had previously provided one test by which Israel could identify a genuine prophet: was his message trustworthy, or did he speak in the name of other gods? (Deuteronomy 13:2) Here Moses provided a second test: if a prophet announced an event that would take place in the future, did it happen? If it didn't, he was a false prophet. If what a prophet predicts doesn't take place, Moses explained, that prophet has spoken as a false prophet. He hasn't spoken by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

So the big question is: Who was this prophet Moses was speaking about? Moses didn't guess. God put words in his mouth.

Moses' immediate answer was that the Lord would send many more prophets to Israel, who would faithfully transmit his words to his people. Hundreds of times they said, ***"The word of the LORD came to me"*** (Ezekiel 35:1), and ***"This is what the LORD says"*** (Amos 2:1), and ***"Listen to what the LORD says"*** (Micah 6:1). Such prophets of the Lord warned Israel again and again not to listen to false prophets who proclaimed their own ideas, dreams, or opinions. Jeremiah blasted the false prophets of his day: ***"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.'"*** Jeremiah 23:16 (NIV) ***"I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied."*** Jeremiah 23:21 (NIV)

Even though Moses would soon die, Israelites would keep on receiving the Lord's words through other prophets.

But these words also contain a long-range promise that the Lord would send another completely unique prophet, just as Moses fulfilled a one-of-a-kind role in Israel's history. This prophet would be like Moses – with a new, superior message – yet he would also be from among his brothers – from Israel. He would bring a new message, and because Moses was the most outstanding spokesman of the law, he would bring a different message. Moses demanded righteousness from Israel, but this new prophet would give what Moses demanded.

This prophet to come was Jesus Christ, the Son of God born of the virgin.

The Apostle John explained: ***"The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"*** (John 1:17). Like Moses, Jesus enjoyed a unique relationship with his heavenly Father. Only he could claim to be one with the Father (John 10:30) and promise to send the Spirit (John 15:26). Because Jesus was the Father's one and only Son, he spoke to the Father face to face. Jesus said, ***"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father"*** (John 14:9). Jesus also arose from among his brothers, from the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14), according to his human nature ***"a descendant of David"*** (Romans 1:3). It wasn't a coincidence that at Jesus' transfiguration, the voice of the Father announced from the cloud, ***"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"*** (Matthew 17:5).

Jesus referred to this prediction of Moses when he said, ***"If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me"*** (John 5:46). Philip confessed that Jesus was ***"the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote"*** (John 1:45). Both Philip and Stephen regarded Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy. Peter, too, proclaimed that Jesus was the very prophet of whom Moses was speaking.

In his comments on the Gospel of John, Luther explained: "Since Christ the Lord was now present, the mission of Moses, the priests, and the prophets, who had instructed the people of Israel and had governed in accordance with the Law, was ended; for their time was not to extend beyond the advent of Christ. With His appearance Moses' rule was to come to a close!"

Luther summarized the importance of the words of our sermon text from Deuteronomy 18: "This is the chief passage in this whole book and a clearly expressed prophecy of Christ as the new Teacher. . . . Appropriately, Moses places it here at the end, after he has finished his discourses concerning the priesthood, the kingdom, the government, and the whole worship of God. It is his purpose to show that in the future there will be another priesthood, another kingdom, another worship of God, and another word, by which all of Moses will be set aside. Here Moses clearly describes his own end, and he yields his mastery to the Prophet who is to come."

God's New Testament people still face false prophets today, and although we live in times far different from those in which Old Testament people lived, our Lord tells us, ***"Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world"***. (1 John 4:1) The good news is that in Jesus Christ, a greater prophet than Moses, we have all the information we need to live rich, satisfying, and useful lives here, and every assurance we need to face the next life without being afraid.

The warning God gave to the Israelites through Moses is certainly relevant today. We are confronted by many who do not speak God's Words and many who distort what God says. ***"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account."***

Jesus, too, is very blunt in his warning against false teachers. ***"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them."*** Matthew 7:15-16 (NIV)

Paul is just as blunt when he tells us by inspiration: ***"I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people."*** Romans 16:17-18 (NIV)

As we approach the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, let us look only to him for truth, justice, and forgiveness. He is the great prophet whom God promised, and he has come unto you today through the Word of God, through his word! Amen.