

Jesus, The Prophet
Deuteronomy 18:15-19

November 10, 2013

A. Prophecy and Prophets

1. "If I Had Only Known"
2. Scripture Reading and Text Deuteronomy 18:15-19
 - a. NKJV incorrect Capitalization ^A
 - b. Special applicability to Jesus, the Christ ^B
3. The Context
 - a. that precedes – Deuteronomy 18:9-12
 - b. that follows – Deuteronomy 18:20-22 ^C

B. Jesus, The Prophet

1. Testimony of John the Baptist ^D
2. Testimony of His Audience ^E
3. Testimony of His Followers ^F
4. Testimony of God ^G

^A 2 Peter 1:20-21

^B Luke 10:16, Acts 3:22, 7:37, Hebrews 1:1-2

^C Deuteronomy 13:1-3

^D John 1:21, 25-26, 29, 33

^E John 3:2, 6:14, 7:40; 4:19, 25, 29

^F John 1:45; Acts 3:22-23, 7:37

^G John 5:45-46, Matthew 17:5

C. Jesus, Like Moses

1. Prophet ^H
2. Law-Giver ^I
3. Judge ^J
4. Redeemer
5. Steward ^K

D. Listen to Him!

1. Today's False Prophets
 - a. Humanism ^L
 - b. Science
 - c. Man's Religions
2. Voice of Christ, The Prophet ^M

^H Deuteronomy 31:20-21, Luke 19:41-44

^I Exodus 20ff; Matthew 5-7

^J Exodus 18:13ff; John 12:48, 12:31, 5:22

^K Hebrews 3:2-6, John 1:17

^L Genesis 11:4-6, 1:28, 8:17

^M Matthew 11:28-30, John 6:68

A. Prophecy and Prophets

1. “If I Had Only Known”

- a. have you ever heard anyone say that?
- b. perhaps you have said it yourself
- c. what mistakes could have been avoided, what trouble averted, says a person, if I had any idea ahead of time of the results
- d. how many a leader, a politician, a business man would not have spoken in such a way, acted in such a manner, made such a decision, if they had only known of what was to happen
- e. it has been true of individuals, of corporations, and of nations
- f. so people have this desire to have a glimpse at the future

2. Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (NAS)

a. 15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. 16 This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’ 17 The Lord said to me, ‘They have spoken well. 18 I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.’

b. NKJV incorrect capitalization of Prophet —{2}.

- (A) the translator, by using a device such as capitalization, should not limit the meaning of Scripture which is not warranted by the text, the immediate context and the idiom of the original language
- (B) neither this text, nor the rest of the Bible limits this to Christ; the word prophet, *nabi'*, was equally used of the other OT prophets – it has no specific connotation of a Divine Prophet
- (C) this passage applies to the office of prophet, being true of every prophet raised up by God over the next 1,500 years or so

- (1) the words they spoke were given to them by God
 - (2) "20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:20-21)
 - (3) upon what these prophets said, because it was God who spoke through them, Israel would be called to account by God
 - (4) that these verses applied to true prophets is made clear by the immediate context to which I shall refer in a few moments
- c. Nevertheless, that being said, we must go on to say that these verses in a very special way applied specifically to Jesus, the Christ
- (A) with these words, "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me." (Luke 10:16), Jesus claimed to speak with the authority of the prophet as did Moses
 - (B) firstly Peter in Acts 3:22, "Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to him you shall give heed to everything He says to you.'", and then Stephen in Acts 7:37, "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.'", applied these words to Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ
 - (C) and Hebrews 1:1-2a show that Jesus, Son of God, was the final word in that series of prophets, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, ..."

3. The Context

a. What Goes Before

- (A) Israel was about to enter the land of Canaan
- (B) the people of that territory were about to be dispossessed because of their iniquity – God had graciously given them four centuries to repent, but their actions had become ever more detestable
- (C) "When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one

who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you.” (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)

- (D) those nations acted in accord with their devilish worship, ordered their political rule according to the occult, in all its forms
 - (E) that was not to be the way of God’s people: no horoscopes, no ouija boards, no fortune-tellers for them – God has a better way
 - (F) for His people he would establish a prophet, a body of men and women in the nation that would speak forth His will to them
- b. What Comes After
- (A) but how would such people be recognized?
 - (B) how would they know that such a prophet was in truth speaking in the Name of the Lord, and was speaking the Lord’s words?
 - (C) the verses following our text today give the first test
 - (1) “When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:22) – such a false prophet, says verse 20, shall die.
 - (2) this is the fulfilled prophecy test
 - (D) but there was also to be a second test
 - (1) how were they to know this wasn’t just by chance, a lucky guess by someone?
 - (2) the answer to that had been provided previously: “1 If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Deuteronomy 13:1-3)
 - (3) the prophet’s words must not conflict with revelation that God had already made, must not be contrary to Scripture

- c. thus the context shows that our text has to do with the entire class of a prophet: what was his role, how he was to be recognized
- d. such a prophet would be like Moses
 - (A) God's message through such a prophet would build upon what God had revealed through Moses
 - (B) in the OT you discover that is just what the prophets did
 - (C) time and time again they spoke to bring repentance, to bring the people back to God's commandments through Moses
 - (D) but above all, they pointed their people to the coming One , the Anointed One – Messiah – whom God would raise up to speak to His people, the prophet like Moses

B. Jesus, The Prophet

1. Testimony of John the Baptist

- a. is implicit in his denial that he, John, was that Prophet, but instead he pointed to Jesus as that one greater than himself
- b. "They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he *said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."" (John 1:21)
- c. "They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know." (John 1:25-26); who was that One?
- d. "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)
- e. "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'" (John 1:33)

2. Testimony of His Audience

- a. it is implied in the words of Nicodemus: "this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.'" (John 3:2)

- b. the Jews after the feeding of the 5,000, "Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.'" (John 6:14)
- c. and later after teaching in the temple at the feast of tabernacles, there was division among the Jews, but "Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, 'This certainly is the Prophet.'" (John 7:40)
- d. listen to the words of the Samaritan woman: "The woman *said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet." (John 4:19) ... "The woman *said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.'" (John 4:25) ... ""Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" (John 4:29)

3. Testimony of His Followers

- a. Philip – "Philip found Nathanael and *said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'" (John 1:45)
- b. Peter to the crowd at the temple after the healing of the lame man, in describing Jesus, the Christ – "22 Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to him you shall give heed to everything He says to you. 23 And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'" (Acts 3:22-23)
- c. Stephen in his testimony to Jesus before being martyred – "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.'" (Acts 7:37)

4. Testimony of God

- a. God the Son, Jesus Himself – "45 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. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me." (John 5:45-46)
- b. God the Father: "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'" (Matthew 17:5), those last words being the same as those Deuteronomy 18:15 – 'you shall listen to him' ... a command

C. Jesus, Like Moses

1. Prophet

- a. God foretold through Moses the coming faithlessness of Israel once in Canaan: "20 For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant. 21 Then it shall come about, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify before them as a witness (for it shall not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants); for I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore." (Deuteronomy 31:20-21)
- b. in like fashion, Jesus foretold the punishment of the Jews with the destruction of Jerusalem, "41 When He approached *Jerusalem*, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.'" (Luke 19:41-44).
 - (A) that is an accurate picture of what happened about 40 years later even to the extent that Titus had them plough the temple area
 - (B) this destruction took place, not because of the rebellion of the Jews against Rome, but because they rejected Christ

2. Law-Giver

- a. Moses gave law governing the life of the nation of Israel in the land
- b. Jesus, the law of His kingdom pronounced in the sermon on the mount

3. Judge

- a. Moses would spent the whole day judging until his father-in-law Jethro had him delegate the task through various ranks of judges
- b. Jesus said, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I

spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” (John 12:48)

- c. by his obedience to death Jesus could state: “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” (John 12:31)
- d. and the right of judgement was given to Jesus by God: “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,” (John 5:22)

4. Redeemer

- a. Moses delivered the nation from a physical bondage in land of Egypt
- b. Jesus delivered his people from spiritual bondage of sin

5. Steward

- a. Hebrews tells us this about Moses and Jesus Christ in their acting as stewards over God’s house: “2 He *(Christ)* was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. 3 For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.” (Hebrews 3:2-6)
- b. as God’s stewards (*oikonomoi* – house rulers), both Moses and Jesus Christ initiated a dispensation (*oikonomia* – house rule) – a covenant or testament: “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

D. Listen to Him!

1. Today’s False Prophets

a. of Humanism

(A) man is a god who can accomplish whatever he sets out to do

(B) the Bible agrees –

- (1) man said, “... Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered ...” (Genesis 11:4)

- (2) "The Lord said, '...And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.'" (Genesis 11:6)
- (3) and because man's aspirations were sinful, against God's will (Genesis 1:28, 8:17) the Lord stepped in and scattered them

b. of Science

- (A) which says, 'there is no God'
- (B) and 'it all happens by chance'
- (C) and we have the ultimate knowledge that supersedes the Bible

c. of Man's Religions

- (A) devised by man according to the conceit of his own heart
- (B) providing this means or that of possibly making peace with God
- (C) and none of them giving any assurance

2. Voice of Christ, The Prophet

- a. standing out unsurpassed in the midst of these other voices
- b. proven to be the Prophet by many infallible proofs
- c. attested by many witnesses
- d. who invites us, "28 Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)
- e. who can afford to ignore His words?
- f. Peter's answer was, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.' – let that, too, be your answer and mine

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM	-	<i>Biblical Museum</i> , Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC	-	<i>The Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> , © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
Gill	-	<i>Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament</i> , by John Gill, D.D.
K&D	-	<i>Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament</i> , by C. F. Keil, D.D., & F. Delitzsch, D.D., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
Kerux	-	The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com .

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2. It has since been pointed out to me that some (I believe, later) editions of the NKJV do not do this. The KJV does, for the prevailing interpretation of the 15th century was that this verse applied solely to the Christ, to which opinion I do not subscribe based on the context of the verse.