**Deuteronomy 18:15-20 (ESV)**

**15**  “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— **16** just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ **17** And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. **18**  I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. **19**  And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. **20**  But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

**“Greater Prophet Than Moses”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. If someone did not know what the Super Bowl was, most Americans would figure something is wrong with that person. In our society, this event in football carries an authority that seems equal to celebrating a religious holiday or what happens at the time of elections. Everything about the Super Bowl is big whether it is the mass of viewers watching, the money spent for advertising, or who even gets to perform at half time. So ingrained is this way of life, you have to wonder what many would be like if there was no Super Bowl? What else would command such attention and loyalty for people to follow?

More important than football for Americans is the security Israel felt with Moses. After deliverance from slavery in Egypt and wandering in the wilderness forty years, God now set a new way before Israel. The Promised Land lay before them across the Jordan River, but one fact was certain. Moses would not be joining them in that journey. Besides not having the only prophet they ever knew, Israel stood before a long dark way that was far from secure. Deuteronomy is the last book authored by the great prophet Moses. More than a reminder about the past was God’s faithfulness to send a prophet like Moses went with Israel. We have that promise fulfilled as the true people of God now by baptism. The Lord provides in Jesus the final prophet that paves the way of victory for any by faith in Him.

Israel needed to have a prophet like Moses to speak. Without God’s Word, they were helpless and trapped in their own darkness. However, when the Holy God of Israel did speak at Mt. Horeb or Sinai fear and distress fell on all. The reason Moses spoke was because the people said, “Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.” Israel needed the Word, but there had to be another way for God to speak to sinners. Moses filled that role in delivering the Word so all could receive it. Yet, better things would come by God’s grace in the Promised Land. Moses declared God would raise up a prophet like himself and it was to him they were to listen. Over the years, other prophets spoke to Israel, but none had an authority that seemed greater than Moses.

Who leads the baptized people of God spoke life to us by His Name. Jesus brings with His Word teaching that has, “authority, and not as the scribes.” The scribes, like anyone else, studied what God said by the Prophets. Yet, Jesus had His own authority as the Son of God. Moses saw that the promised prophet would break the mold of prophet. Luther tells us, “Therefore it is necessary that this Prophet, who is like Moses…be superior to Moses and teach greater things. Unless He were greater than Moses, Moses would not yield obedience and authority to Him” (LW Vol. 9). Jesus foretells the future like any prophet, but what He finally teaches is fullness for us in the Gospel. This is authority greater than the Law, but the truth of life, forgiveness, and righteousness God gives to sinners by the Word become flesh. We need no new prophet for Jesus and His Word silences sin, death, and the Devil.

A prophet like Moses would be light against the darkness. This was an evident need for Israel with imminent danger before them in the Promised Land. Moses left more than a mere heartfelt thought that, “God will be with you.” The Lord would send a real presence after Moses to protect His people. It would come in the voice of authority and love to cast out the false idols and prophets. Joshua was the first of the prophets to shine like Moses. He safely led Israel in the land with promising Word of God that brought down the walls of Jericho. Later, other prophets came like Moses to be light like Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Isaiah. They all guided God’s people with the Lord’s voice calling them to repentance and faith repeatedly. What came from kings, priests, or judges was short term. What prophets proclaimed was an enduring Word that would last. It was divine protection against false speaking in the Name of God or others promoting salvation in the name of other gods.

The same threats face the baptized today. Jesus casting out demons shows His Word is for our good. What He says exposes the deception of false religions and prophetic voices that silence the Gospel. Like Israel, danger also lurks from within. The apostle Peter says, “…there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them…(2 Peter 2:1). President Harrison shined light on the Northwest district of the LCMS. Recently, they pardoned a pastor who openly teaches women’s ordination, evolution, homosexuality, and other false doctrine. His reply was frank, “I am saying that if my Synod does not change its inability to call such a person to repentance and remove such a teacher where there is no repentance, then we are liars and our confession is meaningless.”[[1]](#footnote-1) God help us not to be so halfhearted with His Word and Sacrament. Love speaks the truth to protect just as Jesus laid down His life as a ransom for many.

The Lord used prophets along the way at last to lift up His Son. They were all looking to the Lord’s promise of a prophet like Moses. Jesus not only speaks truth, but is the truth. He not only brings life, but His life is the sacrifice. He not only shows the way, but is the way everlasting. As all the prophets, even Moses only went so far with God’s people. Jesus lamented over such a loss saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!” (Matt 23:37). Yet, God’s Son carved a path by the cross to break that pattern. By whips and nails, death and the tomb what sinners and darkness saw as another defeat. Three days later Jesus rose fulfilling the promise of the Father to be faithful more than Moses. His peace and salvation took the lead with the prophetic voice saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me…” (Matt 28:18).

Jesus now slays the darkness of our sin and selfishness by His forgiving Word. Darkness and the Devil meet His Word in this world only to fall down before Him. His presence at the Lord’s Supper shields us with truth and love to say with the Psalmist, “You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance” (Psalms 32:7). As we wait for the Promised Land, what else commands such attention and loyalty for the baptized? The Super Bowl and anything in life cannot satisfy the eternal weight of glory that will stand on the Last Day when all other works fail. Moses tells us Jesus cares above all and is able to lead us through the dangers saying, “It is to him you will listen.” Listen for the Son speaks so we can follow without fear for He is faithful. The Lord provides in Jesus the final prophet that paves the way of victory for any by faith in Him. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://wmltblog.org/2015/01/regarding-a-recent-decision-of-a-panel-not-to-proceed-with-charges-regarding-a-public-false-teacher-in-the-lcms/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)