

# AM Deuteronomy 18:15-22 "Listen to him"

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Date: 13 March 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's hear now from the Word of God. Two readings. First is from Deuteronomy, continuing our studies in Deuteronomy, chapter 18, and verses 15 to 22.

Deuteronomy 18, verse 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. 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.

And the Lord said to me, they are right in what they have spoken. 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.

And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. 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.

[ 1 : 40 ] And if you say in your heart, how may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken.

The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. And now we turn over to Luke's Gospel, chapter 9.

The story that I was speaking of to the children. Listen out for the clouds. Luke chapter 9, reading from verse 28 down to 36.

Now, about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.

And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

[ 3 : 06 ] Now, Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep. But when they became fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him.

And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said. As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them. And they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my son, my chosen one. Listen to him. And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Well, let's turn now to the Word of God, and to Deuteronomy, chapter 18, and verse 15.

[ 4 : 32 ] 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.

When I began this series on Deuteronomy, I gave us one of the reasons for studying this book, the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ quotes it so often.

But another reason is that it points us to our Lord Jesus Christ. Here in our text today, we have a very clear prophecy of Christ as a prophet, as the greatest of prophets, the prophet sent by the Lord.

We know that Moses is speaking here about Christ because the Apostle Peter tells us so. In Acts chapter 3 and verse 22, there in Acts 3, Peter and John have just healed the man at the beautiful gate.

A crowd has gathered and Peter is preaching to them. And in the course of his sermon, he says that the Christ was foretold by all the prophets.

[ 6 : 01 ] And as one instance of this, he quotes this verse. He says, Moses said, The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.

You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. There's an echo of it too in that story that we read from Luke 9 of the transfiguration.

Peter and John again and James have been taken up onto the mountaintop by Jesus. And there he is transfigured before them and appears in glory.

And Moses and Elijah appear talking with him. They're about to separate. Peter wants to hold on to the moment. And he suggests making three tents.

One for each of them. But then suddenly a cloud overshadows them. And God speaks out of the crowd, This is my son.

[ 7 : 11 ] My chosen one. Or in some translations, this is my beloved son. Listen to him. It's exactly the same phrase that is used in Deuteronomy.

Deliberately so, surely. God is saying to those disciples, This is the prophet that Moses here, who's just been talking with Jesus, whom you've just seen in glory.

This is the prophet that Moses foretold. Listen to him. This is in fact one of many, many prophecies of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are said to be at least 200 of them. Maybe more. Jesus is unique in that respect.

Think of any of the great men of this world and ask, Were there any who were prophesied beforehand? Winston Churchill, for example.

[ 8 : 25 ] Great man. But I don't recall any medieval prophecies of a man with a cigar who would deliver his people from a terrible enemy and save his nation.

Or Nelson Mandela, if you like. Great man, inspired millions of Africans. But I'm not aware that there are any ancient African prophecies of a man who would spend 27 years in prison and then come out to lead his nation.

But Jesus was prophesied repeatedly by all kinds of prophets for thousands of years. These prophecies are like signposts.

You know, when you're travelling up the M6, you see signposts to Glasgow. I think the first one comes just south of the border and it says Glasgow 100 miles.

And as you keep driving, you keep on seeing signs. Glasgow 83 miles. Glasgow 69 miles. And so it goes on. If you've never been there, you're wondering what is this amazing place Glasgow that we keep on being told about?

[ 9 : 50 ] Well, it's like that with Christ, isn't it? Hundreds of years beforehand, the world is told a saviour is coming. And then again and again and again they're told his coming.

It's nearer now. But he's coming. He's coming soon. And people should have been wondering who is this amazing saviour who is coming?

This particular prophecy is one of the earliest of them given 1500 years or so in advance. And it speaks to us of him as a prophet.

Theologians speak of Christ as prophet, priest and king. A prophet brings God's word to us.

A priest represents us before God. A king rules over us. Jesus is all three.

[ 10 : 55 ] But here the focus is upon his prophetic office. Jesus speaks to us in the name of God. Indeed he is the son of God and therefore we must listen to him.

I want us to consider this morning first the promise here of a prophet like Moses and then the command that we should listen to him.

First let me remind you of the background after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness the Israelites have at last reached the borders of the promised land. Moses has gathered them together he is reminding them of what God has done for them and what God expects of them.

He is preparing them for life in the promised land. He knows that he is about to be taken from them. In the short term Joshua will take over but Joshua too will die.

But one day a prophet will come who will never die. Let's look at what he says about him. First the promise.

[ 12 : 15 ] The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you from your brothers. brothers. Now a prophet as I've said is someone who brings God's word to us.

We tend to think of a prophet as one who tells the future and they often do that. But a prophet can also speak about the present. He is simply a mouthpiece for God. The voice of heaven in this world. There were of course many prophets in the Bible. there were true prophets like Elijah and Elisha and there were false prophets too. And Moses warns us here of the false prophets. There are those who speak in the name of other gods like those prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel whom Elijah opposed. There were also those who presumed to speak in the name of the Lord. But the Lord had not sent them. Like Zedekiah in 1 Kings 22 who told King Ahab what he wanted to hear how he would surely defeat the Syrians.

[ 13 : 37 ] Micah a true prophet opposed him in the presence of the king. His word did not come true showing him to be a false prophet.

Moses gives us this simple rule for testing the prophets. Does it come true?

If what they say fails to come true then you know he was a liar. You know he was not sent from God. Don't listen to him again. Indeed Moses says that he deserves to die.

But there are true prophets too. And our text focuses upon the greatest of them. Our Lord Jesus Christ the prophet of God.

He speaks of him firstly as a prophet raised up by God for you. This was no self proclaimed prophet offering his own views.

[ 14 : 45 ] This was a man sent by God who spoke God's words. Moses underlines that in the verses that follow where he tells how God had told him about this.

He takes them back to Mount Horeb reminds them how God had spoken to them then from the mountain with thunder and lightning and the sound of a trumpet and with fire and they were afraid and they said don't let God speak to us anymore lest we die.

And God had granted that request and for forty years God had spoken to them through Moses. But God had promised Moses he says in verse eighteen I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among your brothers and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

I take it from those verses that Moses had been holding on to this promise in his heart all those forty years whether he had shared them with the people or not I don't know but he does now.

A greater prophet than me is coming. God has promised it. this prophet the Lord Jesus Christ he will speak the words that God puts in his mouth.

[ 16 : 17 ] That's the promise. And that's exactly what Jesus did. He says in John eight and verse twenty six I declare to the world what I have heard from him.

He spoke the word of God. secondly he says he is like Moses. Well in what way is he like Moses? Well certainly not in any outward way. Moses was eighty when he was called by God. He was a hundred and twenty now. Jesus was only thirty when he began his ministry and thirty three when he died.

No outward similarity but there are other ways in which they are similar. Moses was the great leader of his people leading them from Egypt through the wilderness to the promised land of Canaan. And so likewise Jesus is our great leader leading us through the wilderness of this world to the promised land of heaven. Moses demonstrated his calling from God with signs and wonders.

[ 17 : 34 ] Jesus likewise performed miracles to prove that he was as he claimed the son of God. Moses was the sole mouthpiece of God in his generation.

Jesus was the supreme teacher the one through whom God spoke. Yet he was greater than Moses. It says in Hebrews 3 and verse 5 Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant.

to testify to the things that were to be spoken later. But Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. Finally he was a man like Moses and an Israelite like Moses.

One from among you from your brothers. A man first. God has given us one who can speak to us with a human voice who understands our human heart but also an Israelite.

God had chosen Israel to be his people and therefore the Messiah had to be an Israelite. As Paul says in Galatians 4 he was born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive the adoption as sons.

[ 19 : 10 ] This incidentally disproves the claim that Muslims sometimes make that Moses was speaking here about Muhammad was definitely not an Israelite.

So this then is the promise a prophet like Moses but greater. But now let's come to the command it is to him you shall listen or in some translations him you shall hear.

Hearing is one of the great themes of Deuteronomy at least 45 times in Deuteronomy we are told to hear or to listen depending which translation you have.

The most famous is the great Shema Deuteronomy 6 verse 4 Hear O Israel the Lord your God the Lord is one and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And this hearing or listening is always linked with obedience. It's not a question of simply listening and thinking about it and making up your own mind like someone listening to a candidate in an election and making up their own mind who to vote for.

[ 20 : 45 ] No, we're to listen as servants concentrating carefully so as to understand perfectly what our master wants us to do.

And then we're to go out and do it. We're to hear and obey. Now there are many practical implications here.

And I want to spend my remaining time today looking at some of those implications. First we are to listen to Jesus above all other religious teachers.

Obviously that includes the false prophets but even the best of religious teachers must take second place beside Jesus.

That's the clear message of Luke chapter 9 where Moses and Elijah no less appeared with Jesus talking with him.

[ 21 : 55 ] Here were two of the very best representing the law and the prophets. And yet Jesus takes pride of place even among them.

This is my son my chosen one. Listen to him. Peter had difficulty grasping that didn't he?

I can imagine Peter his mind being full of all kinds of thoughts as he sees Moses and Elijah linking them with Jesus.

There are so many similarities. They were both prophets. Jesus is a prophet. They went up onto the mountaintop. Moses for the giving of the law.

Elijah for that contest with the prophets of Baal. Here is Jesus on the mountaintop. Moses face shone when he came down from the mountain.

[ 22 : 55 ] Jesus face is shining up on the top of the mountain. All three of them are talking together in glory. You can see the train of his thought.

these three great men must be linked. Jesus who we've been following he's on a par with Moses and Elijah. How great he must be.

And his rather lame suggestion is let's make three tents. One for each of them. Quite how he was going to make three tents on the top of a mountain I don't know.

But that's Peter. Speak first, think later. But you see the problem. He's treating them as equals. And God has to silence him.

These are not three equals. One is infinitely greater than the other two. This is my beloved son. Listen to him.

[ 24 : 02 ] This is the one that Moses was speaking about. Moses, the author of Deuteronomy is right there in Luke chapter nine on the mount of transfiguration seeing for himself the fulfillment of his own prophecy.

It's Jesus who is transfigured. The others just share in his glory. And they're talking about him, not themselves. they're talking about the cross in fact.

His departure which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. In the Greek his exodus. Not the exodus of Moses time, but the exodus that Jesus will accomplish.

The focus is entirely upon him. And I think Peter did grasp it. We see that from that quote in Acts chapter 3.

There he speaks of Jesus as the prophet of God prophesied by Moses above even Moses and Elijah. Now don't misunderstand me.

[ 25 : 19 ] Moses and Elijah were servants of God. They spoke the word of God and certainly we must listen to them. But Jesus is the living word.

we must listen to him above all. And if we must listen to Jesus above Moses and Elijah then how much more must we listen to him above the words of popes or archbishops or indeed of any of the godly ministers of the church.

Even the great reformers even the godliest of ministers today they all take second place to Jesus and they would all say to you listen to him.

Secondly we must listen to him rather than the world. We're surrounded today by a thousand voices all clamouring for our attention.

turn on the TV read the newspapers look at the internet listen to the man in the street in the cafe and the workplace and you'll hear all kinds of opinions expressed many of them contrary to the word of God and they can be very insistent voices there's no longer any respect for the bible as the supreme authority people openly question the bible people insist that their views are right that they know better than the bible indeed they even take the moral high ground and say that our views are wrong and immoral now I don't say that we should shut our ears to the world we need to listen to understand the world and sometimes the world does get it right and sees things that we don't see but always always put

[ 27 : 33 ] Jesus above the world the world is confused the world is in darkness listening to the world is like listening to people who are just guessing at the truth Jesus knows the truth Jesus is the truth listen to him listen to him also above the tumultuous thoughts of your own heart we're also confused at times and there are times when we're led astray by our own thoughts we have confused ideas sometimes about the truth we have confused ideas sometimes about ourselves we have ungodly desires unworthy thoughts about others unworthy thoughts about ourselves either puffed up with pride or else filled with self hatred we're cast down when we should be full of hope we're full of doubt when we should be full of faith stop listening to yourself come back to the supreme authority to the

Lord Jesus Christ what does the Lord say that is what matters finally listen to him whatever he says listen to him when he speaks about the present and how you should live in the sermon on the mount for example and in all his teaching he always knows best listen to him when he speaks about the future Jesus has been tested as a prophet in this respect what he predicted about the fall of Jerusalem for example in AD 70 that did come to pass proving him to be a true prophet what he says about the second coming that will come to pass and what he says about the great day of judgment it will happen listen to his warnings listen to him when he warns you about sin he's not warning you without reason he's warning you out of love because he wants to save you from the consequences of sin listen to him equally when he speaks word of comfort to you there's a very telling statement in psalm 77 my soul refused to be comforted and sometimes we cling on to our sorrows don't we our fears our anxieties when all the while

Jesus is speaking comfort to our souls he is remember a prophet for you not a prophet against you he's on your side listen to him above all when he speaks about salvation that's his supreme message and that message is of course himself I am the bread of life I am the light of the world I am the way the truth and the life come to me believe in me follow me he came to save us by dying for our sins that remember was what Moses and Elijah were talking about and his message is simply to trust in him and God has confirmed that message by raising him literally from the dead hear him and trust him as your savior let me add finally listen to those to whom Christ has given authority just in case anyone should think

I'm setting Christ over against the apostles let me say the apostles were those who were sent by Christ inspired by the spirit speaking the words of Christ to us neither am I setting him over against the other scriptures Jesus himself endorsed the whole of the scriptures the old testament which had already been written and the new testament which was yet to be written it's all the word of God and we must listen to its all but at the heart of it all is the word of Christ the supreme prophet so let me ask you as we close will you listen to him Israel tragically didn't listen at least not as a nation many of them did the apostles themselves were all Jews thousands of Jews were saved but many of them rejected

Christ and still do pray for them that they might at last listen to their prophet but what about yourself it's a serious matter not to listen to him Moses says in Deuteronomy 18 verse 19 whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name I will require it of him ominous words there are solemn words in Proverbs 1 and verse 26 where wisdom says because I have called and you refuse to listen because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof I also will laugh at your calamity Jesus is the wisdom of God speaking those words to us but if you will listen to him then you will find that he has the words of eternal life at the wedding feast of

[ 33 : 54 ] Cana when they ran out of wine Mary gave the servants a word of wisdom which still applies to us today and with this I close whatever he says to you do it amen amen love in a come real life he feels like that ■ he unfold colour