



Deuteronomy 18:15-22
Speaking for God

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.

Pastors and Ministers are often asked accusingly regarding their teaching and preaching ministries - ***“What right do you have to say such things?”*** To a certain extent it’s a fair question, after all, I’m not standing up here telling anecdotes. I stand here and I say “This is the way to go to heaven” and “this is the way to go to Hell” and “this is right” and “this is wrong” and so on, I declare certain things true, and other false.

Now if all I am doing is giving men my personal opinions, then I have no right to make such declarations, they are ultimately worthless. After all, I’m not infallible, I’m no genius, my opinions do not have the weight of law, my opinion that something is true does not make it so, and regarding how to get to heaven, if it is only my opinion, what fool takes directions to someplace based on the “opinions” of someone who has never even been there?

It is only if the minister is actually speaking forth what God has revealed, acting as His messenger that His words have weight and authority. Moses, for instance, did not merely tell the people what He thought or act on His own authority, but rather He went as the Lord’s Messenger – the Lord specifically sent Him to Israel saying: “Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.” (Exodus 4:12)

But Moses is about to die, how then would the people continue to hear from the Lord after Moses was gone? After all, they were not to resort to the false methods of divination of the Canaanites. They had the five books of the Law giving the Lord’s revelation, but would God speak no more to them? Well

the Lord assured them in this He had much more to say, and He indicated that He would continue to reveal Himself and His will through the office of the Prophet -

There are two senses in which this passage

- 1) First the Lord is establishing an ongoing prophetic office in Israel. He would raise up men who would speak His word to the people.
- 2) But it also pointed to the coming not just of prophets, but THE PROPHET, the Messiah or anointed one of God. The one who would not only speak to the people for God, but speak as God and lead them as well. He would be not only their Prophet, but their Priest, and their King.

That is why when the people saw the miracle working power of Christ in John 6 to make bread, they remembered the Word of Moses and attempted to take Him by force and make Him King saying *"This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."* (John 6:14b)

They had been terrified when God had spoken and wanted Moses to be a mediator who would stand between them and God and bring them His word. They had said **"Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die."**

When sinful men heard the voice of the Holy God they were terrified.

They needed a messenger like Isaiah one whose sins had been purged, who was able to stand before the Lord God without being destroyed and then faithfully transmit His words.

Is. 6:5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.

7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

They had to be like Moses – Therefore Future Prophets would have to:

- **Live Godly Lives**
- **Show Faithfulness in their Ministry**
- **Carry out their task with Devotion and Self-Sacrifice**

You'll notice that the office of Prophet is listed last amongst all the offices that we're to exist in Canaan, we've had magistrates, judges, Kings, Priests, and now finally prophets. And the order there is deliberate Because if those who were supposed to be leading God's people were themselves to go against His commandments and become apostate as was frequently the case, then the Lord Himself would correct them. As Christopher Wright put it **"The Last Word would be God's"** And indeed we see Prophets rebuking kings for disobedience. Who can forget Nathan's stunning rebuke to David when He had broken God's law by committing adultery with Bathsheba and then had murdered Uriah - YOU ARE THE MAN! And again and again, prophets like Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Micaiah had gone to wicked kings and priests and exposed and condemned their iniquity.

The messages of these Prophets would not be original, God's word would be in their mouths. Therefore to rebel against these messages was not to rebel against the prophet, but to rebel against the God who had spoken through Him and the prophet was not to alter or change the word of the Lord in any form. The punishment for doing so would be severe.

You remember the Lord had commanded Moses

Numbers 20:8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals."

Moses however had disobeyed

Numbers 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?"

11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

Because of that, Moses was not able to enter into the Promised Land.

Therefore, because hearing His word was so terribly important, there had to be some way of confirming that what the prophet said was true. Now the criteria that the natural man employed was "If I like what the prophet is telling me" but that was not the Lord's standard, the Lord's standard was accuracy. Namely if the prophecy did not come to pass, then the prophet was *not* a true prophet of the Lord. God's standard of accuracy was 100%

The people were to watch the course of that prophet's ministry and teaching, if he had that character of being like Moses in that he Lived a Godly Life, Show Faithfulness in His Ministry, and Carried out His task with Devotion and Self-Sacrifice and MOST IMPORTANTLY what he said came to pass, then He was a true prophet.

But if He prophesied in the name of false gods or he said something and it didn't happen, then he was a false prophet and was to be put to death, regardless of how much the people might like the falsehoods he was saying.

I was watching on Saturday as a female prophetess, was going about saying "the Lord said to me", then "the Lord told me to tell you" and all of it not surprisingly related to assured increase in and through "her ministry." And all I could think was "*does this woman have any idea the judgment she is calling down upon herself according to the criteria set forth here?*" Here she was striding back and forth saying glibly, "thus sayeth the Lord." Brothers and sisters, if Moses, beloved of the Lord was forbidden to enter the promised land for changing the Lord's word, what will be the penalty for inventing things He never said in order to enrich yourself?

Well let me give you some applications of this –

1) First, When it comes to prophesy, men would always prefer to hear what they want to hear, rather than what God has to tell them.

Isa. 30:9 That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, Children who will not hear the law of the LORD;

10 Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.

11 Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us."

12 Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel: "Because you despise this word, And trust in oppression and perversity, And rely on them,

13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you Like a breach ready to fall, A bulge in a high wall, Whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.

This word steps on my toes as well!

If a doctrine or teaching is easily accepted by an unbeliever, it probably isn't true

“Oh I don't believe that either” then you have simply a clash of opinions, and theirs are winning.

2) The Rule of thumb Here Still Applies to the Pastors of the Church - To Prophecy is not merely to Foretell, but to Forthtell, to speak for God – “We perceive, then, that pastors were from the first appointed, not that they should themselves rule, or subject the Church to their imaginations, but only to be the organs of the Holy Spirit. And those who in these days usurp a greater power, ought to be altogether deposed from their sacrilegious despotism.”

- **Live Godly Lives**
- **Show Faithfulness in their Ministry**
- **Carry out their task with Devotion and Self-Sacrifice**

We are not to give men what they want, we are to command me to do only that which the Lord has told them in His Word, we are not to add to it, nor take away from it, nor change in *any way*:

WCF 1.1. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable;[1] yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation.[2] Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church;[3] and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing:[4] which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary;[5] those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.[6]

3) Have You Heard the Words of the one these verses ultimately pointed towards?

Deut. 18:15 " The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

Peter made it clear in Acts 3 that prophets had pointed forward to the coming of Christ and that He was the ultimate prophet who brought together all of these qualities perfectly.

Acts 3:22 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.

23 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

1 Peter 1:10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven -- things which angels desire to look into.

There are many who are willing to acknowledge and trust Moses, but not Christ...

NKJ Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.

4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.

5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,

6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.