

In the past few weeks our Old Testament lessons have been focusing on various figures who have reflected Jesus in some way. Samuel was a boy in the temple who served Eli the priest, and Samuel himself would go on to be a leader in Israel, serving them as a priest in the tabernacle, as a prophet, and as a political leader. He reflected Jesus in that Jesus serves as our priest who prays for us, as a prophet who teaches us God's Word, and as our king who rules over the heavens and the earth.

Last week we discussed Jonah. Jonah was unlike Jesus in that Jonah was a reluctant prophet, not wanting to go do his duty and instead going the opposite way. But in many ways, Jonah was like Jesus as just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days, so too was Jesus in the belly of the earth, and just as Jonah went to save the people of Nineveh from destruction, so too Jesus came to save the entire human race.

Today, we have yet another figure stepping onto the stage. We are reading from Deuteronomy, which is Moses' farewell speech to the people that he led through the wilderness. In this book Moses says to the Israelites, **“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—”** IN ORDER TO SAVE US BY HIS CERTAIN WORD, THE LORD SENDS FROM AMONG US A PROPHET GREATER THAN MOSES.

I. The Lord sends a prophet greater than Moses. Yet to the ears of the Israelites that hardly seems possible. Moses was one of *the* greatest figures in the Old Testament, revered by Jews to this day as one of the key figures of their religion.

Taking a step back, let's talk about what a prophet is. A prophet is a representative of the Lord God who acted as an intermediary between God and man. Often, they were God's mouthpieces. Thus, prophets, communicating with God, could predict the future, but that wasn't the only thing they could do.

Broadly speaking, there were three kinds of prophets: doers, speakers, and writers. The doer prophets were the miracle workers. I think specifically of Elijah and Elisha. There is no book of Elijah or Elisha, but 1 and 2 Kings records the many miracles they did by the Lord's power: raising the dead, healing lepers, and loaves multiplied.

The speaker prophets were the preachers, the ones who spoke as God's mouthpieces and even spoke truth to power. Maybe you think of the prophet Nathan who had the unenviable task of confronting King David with his sin problem. Maybe we also think of Jonah who had the job of preaching to Nineveh as we previously mentioned.

The writer prophets were the scribes, they're the ones who have books of the same names. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and Amos, just to name a few.

They often shared visions of the future with God’s people, and they also had no shortage of words of correction to offer them as well.

And to be fair, it isn’t all cut and dried, a given prophet can be a doer, a speaker, and a writer. But no other prophet had done all three quite like Moses. Moses was a doer, to be certain. He was a miracle MVP: by God’s power he showed the Israelites the ten plagues, he split the waters, and he gave his people food and drink in the wilderness.

Moses was a speaker. He spoke truth to power as he confronted Pharaoh saying, “Let my people go!” He spoke to God as he communed with him on Mount Sinai. He spoke to the people as he came down the mountain with the ten commandments.

And man, was Moses a writer. The Torah, or the Law, are the first five books of the Bible, and Moses wrote all five books. That’s more than any other one Old Testament author. If the prophets were to go head to head at the race track, Moses would win the proverbial triple crown. Doer, speaker, writer: he ticks all the boxes.

Yet Jesus is greater than Moses. His miracles dwarf that of Moses. Demons are cast out, the blind regain sight, the hungry are fed, even the waves are calmed. Most importantly, Jesus raises Himself from the dead. Jesus is a speaker, we see this in our Gospel text, that His preaching authority is even better than the Scribes who were the Bible experts of His day.

To be fair, Jesus in His earthly ministry did not write a book of the Bible. Strictly speaking, there is no book of Jesus that He Himself wrote. Yet, He is the Word of God in the flesh. As John says, “**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.**” All the writers of the Bible wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from Jesus Christ Himself. In that sense you can say that Jesus is the author of *every* book of the Bible.

As amazing as Moses was, he was not perfect. Moses fled Egypt when he murdered someone. When the Lord called Moses, Moses found excuses not to obey the Lord. In the wilderness, Moses disobeyed God and his punishment would be that he would not set foot in the promised land to which he was leading his people.

Instead, the Lord would raise up Joshua to follow in Moses’ footsteps and the people would enter the promised land through Joshua. In that way, Joshua is greater than Moses in that Joshua completed the journey that Moses started those forty years before their desert wanderings began.

Yet want to know something interesting? Jesus and Joshua share the same name. Much as Carlos and Carl are the same name but in different languages, or Jose and Joe, so too Joshua and Jesus. Jesus is that greater successor to Moses who would lead us into the promised land.

Through His death on the cross, your sins have been forgiven. Through His resurrection on the third day, the gates to the promised land have been opened to you. Through faith in this prophet greater than Moses, the way to eternal life has been cleared for you.

What else does Moses say about this coming prophet? II. The Lord sends a prophet from among us. The Lord says through Moses, **“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers.”** This prophet will be like us.

At Mount Sinai there was a problem, when God was in the presence of Moses, the sky thundered and the voice of God boomed, scaring the people. **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”** God in His undimmed majesty would melt sinful humanity like a bonfire in a wax museum.

Thus, the author of the book of Hebrews tells us that our Savior had to be made like us in every way so that He may know what it is like to suffer and to be tempted. Jesus set aside the majesty of His glory so that He could come to us as our own brother. To quote a familiar Christmas hymn, “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate deity! Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!”

So Jesus didn’t come down from a cloud, but He was born in a lowly manger from a Palestinian peasant girl not unlike other Israelite women of her time. Jesus grew up in a household just as you did. So that He could be your prophet greater than Moses who not only can relate to us, but related to His Father perfectly.

Finally, III. The Lord sends a prophet with a saving word. The Lord says through Moses, **“And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.”** Jesus Christ spoke all the words that His Heavenly Father wanted Him to speak. Many Bibles have red letters for the words of Jesus. There’s a reason for this: to highlight their importance.

Jesus is greater than Moses. He is greater than a prophet. He is your Savior. Because He is God He Himself can speak words with authority. After His sermon in the synagogue, **“...they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”**” Jesus speaks words to comfort, to give peace, and to save.

This week, as you go about your daily tasks, as you ingest the latest news story that makes you see red, I encourage you to spend some time in those red letters of the Bible. Read through the Gospels. Read through the Gospel of Mark. When you read news that makes you worried or scared, take time in the Sacred Scriptures which are powerful to comfort, encourage, and save.

Look to Jesus, the prophet greater than Moses who is your brother, and who has a saving word for you. Amen!