

# Christ In The Old Testament

## Lesson 2

### Deuteronomy 18:15-22, Acts 3:22-26

This lesson will examine two texts dealing with Jesus Christ, as predicted in the Old Testament through the prophets. Primarily, the voice through which this prophecy is given is Moses, who begins the text by saying, *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him”* (**Deuteronomy 18:15**). Notice a few points about this verse, beginning with the fact that it is the Lord who raises up one prophet or another. *“For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”* (**2 Peter 1:21**). When a man or woman was called to pronounce God’s judgments, it was not because of the independent will of those prophets, but the divine wisdom of God – that is, they did not choose to prophecy what they did. They did choose the judgments, or the proclamations, but were moved by God to say those things that were necessary for others to hear. This point should be emphasize, because understanding the divine origin of the scriptures is essential to understanding God Himself! One can never become a strong Christian without respecting the voice of God in every word of the Bible (**John 12:44-50**). Second, this prophet would be *“like me”* – like Moses.

**Discussion Question:** In what way would the future prophet be like Moses?

Jesus Christ is just like His predecessor in the sense that he is a living man, from humble beginnings, with a human voice, with the capacity to suffer, and with compassion for His flock (both Moses and Jesus pleaded for their *“sheep”* numerous occasions). In a much more practical sense, Jesus and Moses are the same kind of prophet in that they both are intercessors. Moses begged for mercy for the Israelites, just as Jesus pleads on behalf of all people who heed His voice (**1 John 2:1-2**). *“From among you, from your countrymen...”* This portion of the prophecy reveals that the future prophet would be a member of the Israelite nation. *“You shall listen to Him.”* While many Israelites never listened to the call

of Christ in this life, it is certainly true that *all* people, for *all* time, will hear the voice of Jesus on the judgment day.

*“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, lest I die’ (Deuteronomy 18:16).* This verse may be making reference back to **Exodus 20:18-19** when the people of Israel heard the voice of God, and saw that thunder, and became afraid. In that scripture, Moses pleads with them not to fear God, but to approach Him with reverence and holiness. Instead of truly coming close to the Lord, however, the people *“trembled and stood at a distance,”* begging Moses to talk to God on their behalf. While God is not a presence to be afraid of, He is mighty and can induce great fear in those who are weak spiritually. What God may be saying in our text, therefore, is that the Messiah is being sent to the world to balance out the weakness of mankind. While men tremble and fear the presence of God, Christ approaches the throne of judgment with confidence and makes intercession for us directly into the ears of the Almighty (**1 John 2:1ff**)!

*“I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you...” (18:18).* Once again, the Lord is affirming that this great prophet will be of the line of Israel. An important lesson that to learn is that God makes Himself approachable in the form of Christ. While the Father is clothed in glory and power, and sits upon His throne in the halls of His heavenly kingdom, Jesus Christ lived as a man and understands our weaknesses in a most personal way. It is so amazing that God would choose to bring forth a *“prophet from among”* us because it shows that He wants to be approachable – He wants us to know that His son knows how we feel because He was one of us. The ministry of Jesus Christ had far more impact on the world because He lived as a human! This is a primary argument made in **Hebrews 2:5-18**. *“And I will put My words into his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (18:18).* While the prophecy is dealing with Jesus, these statements have a broader application as well. All of God’s prophets spoke by inspiration. Every word written in the Bible was given by God through these men and women of old. What this means, therefore, is that we cannot dismiss the Bible as something that is just a book penned by uninspired people.

*“And 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” (18:19).* Judgment comes to those who do not heed the call of Christ – or the call of *any* prophet for that

matter. God's word is serious business. Our obedience is not something that can be taken lightly. Everything from church attendance, to respecting our parents, to being baptized in the appropriate way is important. To further prove the point in this verse, consider **John 12:47-48**, *"If anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 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."*

*"But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die" (18:20).* The death in this verse is most likely spiritual death, for there have been many prophets throughout the ages who have lived long, full, rich lives. However, examples of false prophets being judged by God are not uncommon in the Bible (**Isaiah 47:12-15**, **Jeremiah 23:16-22**).

*"And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has spoken?'" (18:21).* This is the voice of fear and faithlessness. How sad it would be if we reach the point of questioning what is and what is not the Word of God! Rather than throwing our hands into the air and giving up out of frustration, we ought to seek the Word diligently and look closely for the telltale signs of validity. *"When a prophet speaks in the name of the, 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" (18:22).* Rather than always doubting, we ought to simply trust that God will always provide an answer as to what is His word. If there are words of a prophet that do not legitimately come true, then it is a falsehood. But if all those things do come true then he is inspired. Are there any prophecies in the Bible that never were fulfilled? Now consider other works of prophecy; do call-in psychics always get everything right? Did Joseph Smith hit the head of the nail on all of his prophecies? Supposedly, the popes of the Catholic church have the power of foresight, but have they been able to use that ability for the improvement of the world? Indeed, if there is a prophet speaking falsely, it will be apparent, and we ought to never allow ourselves to be swept away in his lies!

### **Acts 3:22-26**

**Acts 3:22-26** is the explanation of how **Deuteronomy 18:15-22** was fulfilled in both Jesus Christ and in the prophets of the Old Testament. *"Moses said..."* First of all, we see very clearly that the apostle Peter believed that Moses actually said

these things. The Old Testament was not just a collection of fairytales, or fantastically unbelievable myths – it is historical fact. Moses really lived, and he really spoke all of these things. Peter goes on to quote part of our previous text, showing the listeners in the city of Jerusalem that Jesus Christ is the final culmination of this prophecy. He is the great prophet who came from amongst the Israelites to pronounce all righteousness and give a message that meant either life or death depending on the response of the listener.

*“And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23).* Take special note of the word “every” in this verse. Who is amenable to the Law of Christ? Who needs to repent? Who needs to be baptized? Which souls need to become Christian to be saved? Truly, it is every single person in this world who needs Christ. Nobody is exempt from the call to obey, and not a single person who is unrighteous will have an excuse on the day of judgment. *“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).*

*“And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days” (3:24).* Yet another excellent point can be clearly seen, that is, that the events of Christ’s life (from his birth, to his death, and everything in between, and even the establishment of the church) were expected by the prophets of old. Nothing happened as a surprise or contingency plan. The death on the cross was not an accident, nor was the establishment of the Lord’s church an afterthought. While some believe that Christ came to establish a worldly kingdom, but failed and therefore had to settle for the church as a temporary solution, this verse seems to indicate that things all happened according to a great plan!

**Discussion Question:** What was the attitude of the prophets of old toward the coming of the Messiah? How does that attitude compare to those of us now who have the benefit of hindsight?

*“It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the*

*earth shall be blessed” (3:25).* In the literal sense, the people of Jerusalem were the actual descendents of Abraham, the prophets, and the fathers of Israel. However, the application can be much more broad, because it was predicted that in Abraham *“all the families of the earth”* would find salvation. Salvation is not just for the Jew, but also for the Gentile. For all people, regardless of gender or race or social status (**Galatians 3:28**), can be saved in Jesus Christ.

*“For you first, God raised up His servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways” (3:26).* Again, in the limited sense, this verse is saying that Jesus Christ came to the Jews first, allowing them the privilege of hearing the message before the Gentiles. However, it is now clear that the Jews are no longer a specially favored nation in the eyes of God – all people can be favored now. There is a requirement, though, for those who wish to see salvation: repentance. Every single one of us needs to turn from our wicked ways if we ever want to see the bright side of eternity.