

**Year B Fourth Sunday Ordinary Time**  
**Feb. 1, 2009**  
**Dt 18:15-20; Ps 95; 1 Cor 7:32-35; Mk 1:21-28**

The first reading this Sunday is a very important passage in the Bible: in the last book of the Torah (the Law of Moses or Pentateuch), Moses prophesies that one day God will *raise up* a prophet like himself (Moses), that the people should listen to. Now, Moses had a uniquely intimate relationship with Yahweh: at times it is said he spoke to God “face to face” or “mouth to mouth” (Nm 12:6-8; Dt 34:10). God had spoken directly to the people of Israel in a fiery, frightening way on Mount Sinai: so the people themselves had begged that God speak through Moses, and not directly to them, Dt 18:15-16; Ex 20:18-21). This would accredit Moses before Israel for all time, Ex 19:9.

But, still, there would one day be a prophet like Moses who should be listened to. This prophet had not yet come by the end of the Torah: that is what Dt 34:10, in the last chapter says. He was expected. It is this “prophet like Moses” whom Jesus revealed himself to be. This is what Acts 3:22-26 explicitly proclaims of Jesus.

Moses really had never seen God “face to face.” He had asked for this, in Ex 33:18, but no one could see Yahweh and live, Ex 33:20. The Gospel of John states that “no one has ever seen God,” but that “the only-begotten God (literal Greek reading), who was in the bosom of the Father, he has shown us the way to him,” Jn 1:18. Jesus is that prophet like Moses, the “eschatological prophet” of the End Time: Jn 6:14; 7:40, etc. Indeed, Moses wrote about Jesus, Jn 5:45-47. In the Transfiguration, the “Law and the Prophets” (represented by Moses and Elijah) are the two witnesses to Jesus who hear the Father’s voice saying “listen to him,” Mk 9:7, as in Dt 18:15.

Moses gave the “Torah,” translated “Law” in Greek, but which really means “priestly *teaching*.” It was the way to be in relationship with God, until Jesus came “in the fullness of time,” Gal 3:23-29; 4:4-7. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the “Law” (more broadly also meaning “God’s revelation”), Mt 5:17; Jn 19:30. The Law was until Christ, Lk 16:16, then comes God’s Kingdom, when evil is defeated and God really begins to rule as He did before the Fall. This is what Jesus’ “new *teaching*” in Mk 1:22, 27 really means: it is a new, full, definitive revelation by God incarnate with power to destroy evil, which is overcome by Jesus, Mk 1:24, 27.