

**COMMENTARY ON READINGS FOR SUNDAY, JAN. 29, 2006**  
**(Year B, Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time)**  
**(Deut 18:15-20; Ps 95; 1 Cor 7:32-35; Mark 1:21-28)**

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We have often used the “fifty-cent word” *eschatological* in these brief commentaries, and today’s readings will make more clear what it means and how important it is. The first reading is from Deuteronomy, the last book of the Torah or Pentateuch. Moses leaves Israel with his last will and testament, as it were, a blueprint for the future. This is what eschatology is about, the time of the End (Deut 4:30) when God will once again powerfully act as He did in the Beginning, after a long period in which one could think He was asleep (see Isa 51:9; Ps 73:20; Mark 4:38). In Deut, Israel is waiting to enter the Promised Land. They are merely in Moab, still in exile, still awaiting salvation, i.e., the real, final Exodus (see Luke 9:31 Greek).

Moses is leaving them, he is going to die that day. Moses was the greatest prophet, he spoke to God face to face, Deut 34:10-12. He was the intermediary between the people and God, since the people were terrified to hear God directly, Deut 18:16. He now promises that a prophet like him will be *raised up* by God (cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37) one day: this prophet must be listened to (cf. Mark 9:7; Heb 3). Jesus is this expected prophet *raised* by God (Luke 7:16; John 6:14; 7:40; cf. 1:21, 25). Unlike Moses, who gave the Torah (Law or Pentateuch), seen by Paul as temporary, until the End Time (Gal 3), Jesus gives us God’s very essence (John 1:17), and is himself the Way to God (John 10; 14:1-6). This is what the reading from Mark’s gospel also points to: Jesus brings the New Torah (“teaching”) which truly effectuates the unity with God (salvation) merely foreshadowed by the Mosaic Law. He finally destroys evil, giving his life as a ransom (expiation) for many, Mark 10:45; 14:24. Note that rather than recounting Jesus’ “teaching,” Mark 1:27 describes it as the ability to free us from the dark power of sin. See Mark 1:7 + 3:27 + 5:5; 1:25 + 4:39.