

MOSES: PROPHET OF DELIVERANCE

Bible Background – EXODUS 12:28-50; DEUTERONOMY 18:15-22

Printed Text – DEUTERONOMY 18:15-22

True and False Prophets

¹⁵ Moses continued, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

¹⁶ For this is what you yourselves requested of the LORD your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai. You said, ‘Don’t let us hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore or see this blazing fire, for we will die.’

¹⁷ “Then the LORD said to me, ‘What they have said is right.

¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him.

¹⁹ I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf.

²⁰ But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die.’

²¹ “But you may wonder, ‘How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the LORD?’

²² If the prophet speaks in the LORD’s name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the LORD did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared.

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

Throughout the Old Testament, God used intermediaries such as the Prophets to send His message to the people. Moses is still considered the most important prophet of Judaism. Known as *Moshe Rabbeinu* (Hebrew “Moshe our Teacher”), He is the prophet who led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt and the Lawgiver. In this lesson, we will see that Moses prophesied of another prophet to come from the people of Israel that must be adhered to and how that prophecy points to the Messiah. We will reflect on leaders who guide us through seemingly impossible situations and learn to completely rely on God in resolving challenging situations.

Background: In this passage, Moses predicts the coming of Christ. The phrases “prophet like me” (Deuteronomy 18:15, NLT) and “prophet like you” (v. 18, NLT) have immediate reference to the line of Israelite prophets. However, they find their ultimate fulfillment in the prophetic ministry of Christ (see Acts 3:19-23). This is one of the earliest references to the coming of the Messiah. Moses himself was considered a prophet of high stature. This early prediction of another “like me: gave the Israelites a glimpse of God’s plan. It put Moses, God’s servant, in proper perspective in the eyes of the people. As great as the works of Moses

March 7, 2021- Study Guide 1

were, there was still One greater who would come. Moses' prediction of a prophet "like me" not only points to the greatness of the future Messiah but gives insight into what a prophet and leader of God's people should be.

He Comes from the People

Deuteronomy 18:15-16: In Deuteronomy 18:9-22, a warning is given about extremely dangerous tendencies of a wayward people. They often seek God's help by the wrong means. They use evil practices such as sorcery, divination, and witchcraft. Often magic and superstition was used during Moses's time to determine the will of the 'gods.' Even spiritualism, astrology, and palm reading are forms of divination that are practiced today. God forbids such practices then and now. Moses knew that the Israelites would soon enter a land where such practices were common, and he wanted to prepare them on how to discern a true messenger of God.

First, he let them know that God and only God could raise a prophet, and He would raise one from among the people. A prophet is not self-appointed, but God commissioned. This is the first characteristic of a true prophet. Even though Moses speaks of the type of person the Israelites should expect, the New Testament proclaims Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. He is a direct earthly descendant of Abraham, his earthly parents were working class, he was a carpenter. Jesus portrayed the characteristics of a servant-leader. One who has not lived among the people is less likely to understand their thinking and their needs.

◆*How have you seen a leader's humble origins affect their leadership style?*

He Speaks God's Word

Deuteronomy 18:17-18: As a prophet, Moses spoke on God's behalf. As with all true prophets, God puts His words in their mouth" (Jeremiah 1:7-9). Jesus spoke the words of God. "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." (John 17:8). "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 14:24). This is another characteristic of a true prophet: they only speak the words that God has given them. The prophet must not hold back but speak all that God has commanded. Moses said that a true prophet would receive and speak only those things committed to them by the Lord.

His Words Come True

Deuteronomy 18:19-22: To reject the words of a true prophet is to reject God. After all, a true prophet speaks only what God has given to speak. Therefore, the disobedient listener will be held accountable for failure to hearken to such a voice. But what of the fate of one who presumes to speak for God but actually speaks in the name of other gods? Such false prophets would be severely punished by execution. With such serious consequences at stake, Moses acknowledges the importance of being able to discern the difference. The evidence of true prophecy is that the thing spoken by the true prophet actually comes to pass. With so many prophetic ministries prevalent in today's culture, it would behoove believers to exercise caution before jumping on the 'bandwagon.'

March 7, 2021- Study Guide 1

◆*Think of a person who is called a modern prophet and consider whether that person measures up to the test in these verses.*

Conclusion

If a man or woman who professed to be a prophet speaks a prophetic word that proves to be false, that is indication that the prophet is false. However, if one's prophecy proves to be accurate, that is not within itself proof of positive authenticity. The litmus test is somewhat nuanced. There are also moral standards and spiritual credentials that indicate if true prophets that are indeed "like Moses." Those consumed by self-seeking motives are not "like Moses." Those who tolerate and pose no challenge to oppressive practices and injustices are not "like Moses." Those who seem motivated by material and personal gain are not "like Moses." Believers should study closely Deuteronomy 18:15-22 and proceed with caution before accepting prophetic ministries at face value.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Call in the New Testament. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Spring Quarter), 320-328. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.

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Posner, M., "Moses: The Israelite Prophet and Lawgiver Known as Moshe in the Bible", retrieved, March, 2021 from https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/73398/jewish/Moses.htm.

March 7, 2021- Study Guide 1

Lesson for Next Week – March 14 – Study Guide 2

JOSHUA: PROPHET OF CONQUEST

Bible Background ♦ JOSHUA 5:13-6:5
Printed Text ♦ JOSHUA 5:13-6:5, 15-16, 20
Devotional Reading ♦ HEBREWS 11:21-31

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Rahab Rewarded for Her Faithfulness
(Hebrews 11:23-31)

TUESDAY

Jesus Heals Blind Man from Jericho
(Luke 18:35-42)

WEDNESDAY

Enjoying the Manna and Local Produce
(Joshua 5:8-12)

THURSDAY

Marching Around the City of Jericho
(Joshua 2:15-24)

FRIDAY

Rahab and Spies Confirm Rescue Plan
(Joshua 6:6-14)

SATURDAY

Rahab Saved While Jericho is Destroyed
(Joshua 6:22-25)

SUNDAY

Joshua's Successful Conquest of Jericho
(Joshua 4:13-6:5, 15-16, 20)