

March 7, 2021

“Prophet of Deliverance”
Lesson 1 of Unit

Deuteronomy 18:15-22

Intro

This lesson begins our Spring Quarter study. The lessons deal with Old Testament prophets, under the heading “Prophets Faithful to God’s Covenant”. The March unit is called “Faithful Prophets”. Today’s lesson deals with Moses and who God is going to bring to leader the nation of Israel following Moses. Moses is known as a lawgiver because of delivering the 10 Commandments as well as other laws to Israel; however, he is also a prophet, one who speaks God’s words/ideas to the people. At the end of Deuteronomy, in 34:10, it says, “But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses.” Scripture acknowledges him as both lawgiver and prophet.

Read Deuteronomy 18:15-22

1. vs. 15: Moses gives the characteristics of the one who will be raised up as a prophet
 - He will be “from among you, from your fellow Israelites”
 - This one will know God’s laws and be faithful to them
 - He will be “like me (like Moses)”
 - See vs. 18 for more on this comparison
 - He will have authority
 - Moses tells the people, “You must listen to him”
 - This suggests the new prophet will be someone the people need to listen to, to obey

2. vs. 16: Moses tells the people this human voice of God is what they asked for
 - Mt. Horeb / Sinai in Ex.19
 - God speaks to the people, who are terrified at just hearing His voice
 - They plead with Moses to ask God to speak through him (Moses) so they won’t die
 - They had some good reasons to be afraid of dying, and wanting a human voice
 - God had told them to come to the foot of the mountain but not to touch it
 - Disobedience here resulted in death
 - There were fearsome signs: thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, the sound of a trumpet
 - God then gives them the 10 Commandments
 - Can you imagine how fearfully they were received under these conditions?!

3. vs. 17: God agrees with the people’s assessment / request
 - “What they say is good”
 - God will use Moses as the mediator instead of talking to the people directly

4. vs. 18: Part of this verse is a repeat of vs. 15

A prophet from among the Israelites

A prophet like you (like Moses)

Joshua follows Moses as both a leader and a prophet

He leads Israel in a righteous way in serving God only

He speaks to the people the things that God wants them to know

These OT prophets are obviously foreshadowing Jesus

5. vs. 19: God's view on listening to the words of a prophet

God will "call to account" anyone who doesn't listen to the prophet's words

The implication here is that listening equals doing: to listen is to do

Call to account suggests correction of some kind

Typically, this phrase suggests punishment as well as correction

God supports the authority of His prophets

"my words which the prophet speaks in my name"

6. vs. 20: Prophets who say they speak for God, but whom God has not authorized to do so

The NIV uses the phrase "who *presumes* to speak in my name"

Presuming means taking an action that is not approved or authorized

Two tests for verifying the content of an alleged prophet's message

1) Is it consistent with what God has spoken previously?

If not, the message is discarded, and the prophet is deemed false

Is the alleged prophet's character "like Moses"?

Moses was humble, feeling himself unworthy of speaking for God

False prophets are frequently arrogant and self-serving

2) Is the prophet speaking in God's name, or the name of other gods?

Speaking for other gods clearly breaks the first commandment

This makes the person a false prophet

God says the false prophet is to be put to death

This didn't always happen, resulting in damage to Israel's spiritual lives with God

7. vs. 21: Moses anticipates the question that many would ask at this point

"How do we know when this message isn't from God?"

God could know and take care of the false prophet himself

He wants us to be spiritual mature and discerning

God's people have been given God's Word to apply to these situation

8. vs. 22: The final instruction for knowing a false prophet

Does the message come true? If not, the person is a false prophet

Some prophecies don't come true immediately

At some point, events will be able to be matched to a prophecy

It will be clear at that point whether the prophet was true or false

The prophet might have died before this could be established

Knowledge and obedience to what God has said in the past helps here

While we wait to see about this new prophecy, obey what God has said already

Application: Moses was God's leader and servant in guiding the nation of Israel. He is not going to enter the Promised Land, so he must prepare the nation for new leadership, in this case, Joshua. He tells the people what God has given him to say about those who would speak and lead in God's name. There are ways to know if the leader is following God, especially if what that person says is in keeping with what God has said in the past. A knowledge of what God has told us is essential so that we don't get misled by someone claiming to speak for God, but who fails the standards for godly leadership.

Prayer: Father God, give us wisdom to both read Your Word and to understand it. We ask for the Holy Spirit to give us insight as we read, and discernment as we listen to those who would speak in Your name. Help us remain faithful to You always. In Jesus' name, Amen.