

Moses: Prophet of Deliverance

Melissa plopped in the driver's side of the car and waited for her 15-year-old daughter to close the door. She turned on the car radio, knowing that Janell would put in her earbuds. However, she did not.

What had been preoccupying Melissa's thoughts and prayers for the past two weeks was a job offer that had come quite unsolicited. It was more than twice her pay, and more than 2,000 miles away. Melissa did not know anyone in Los Angeles. In addition, she and her ex-husband (Janell's father) had been talking about reconciliation.

Still, wouldn't Melissa have to be crazy to pass up such a great career move? Crowding in on her frantic thoughts were the words from the radio minister. He was talking about choosing God's way over fame and fortune.

"God will speak to your heart about what He wants you to do," the minister was saying. "God has a plan for you. Do not be swayed by your flesh or the world. Listen to God."

At that moment, Melissa heard the Holy Spirit whisper to her heart to stay where she was and watch Him do a new and glorious thing in her and her family's lives.

"I don't want to go to Los Angeles, Mom," Janell said turning to her mother.

"We're not going, sweetheart," Melissa said. "The Lord just told me to stay put!"

1. *What are the means by which God speaks to us today?*

2. *Why is being sensitive to the Holy Spirit vital in paying attention when God speaks?*

3. *Why is listening to God essential in our walk with God?*

The Promise of a Prophet

Deuteronomy 18:15-16, KJV

15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

Deuteronomy 18:15-16, NIV

¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. ¹⁶For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die."

In contrast to the "fortunetellers" the Israelites would find in the promised land, the Lord promised to raise up prophets from among His people. They would speak for Him, provide needed guidance for the Israelites, and reveal their future as a people.

Moses' promise of a "prophet like me" in verse 15 finds its ultimate fulfillment in God's Son. At Pentecost, the apostle Peter recognized Jesus as the prophet that Moses spoke of in this text (Acts 3:22-23). Jesus may also have been thinking of this text when He challenged the Jews of His day with these words: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me" (John 5:46). Like Moses, Jesus also rose up from among the Israelites and became a mediator representing God to the people, as well as interceding on our behalf to the Father (1 Tim. 2:5-6). Just as the people listened to Moses, so we must listen to the prophet who bridges the gap between us and the Father: the Lord Jesus.

The fire, smoke, and darkness that accompanied God's presence and voice on the mountain when He gave them the Law terrified the people (Exod. 19:16-20). As a result, they requested that Moses hear God's message and then relay His words to them (Deut. 5:22-27).

Moses knew his time with the Israelites was coming to

an end, but that would not signify the end of God revealing truth to His people. To fill this need, the Lord would send other prophets who would speak in the name of the Lord, culminating in Jesus, who would fully reveal the Father to us (John 1:17-18; 14:8-11). Jesus came as the ultimate revelation of God's message to not only the Jewish people, but to all of humanity.

4. *Why were Moses' words in Deuteronomy 18:15-16 so timely for the Israelites?*

5. *Who ultimately fulfilled Moses' promise of a prophet?*

The Responsibility to Listen

Deuteronomy 18:17-19, KJV

17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Deuteronomy 18:17-19, NIV

¹⁷The LORD said to me:

"What they say is good.

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

¹⁹I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name."

Verse 17 repeats God's granting of the Israelites' appeal for Moses to speak to them on His behalf (see Deut. 5:28). This did not, however, lessen their responsibility to listen to and obey those whom the Lord sent to them.

What the people heard would not be any different than if the Lord spoke directly to them; the prophets would serve as God's mouthpiece. The prophets who rose up from among the people after Moses would speak with the same authority as though the Lord Himself was talking. The Lord revealed

His message to them, and they acted as His spokesperson in giving His words to the people.

This was especially true with Jesus; He acknowledged that His teachings came from the Father (John 7:16). The night before His crucifixion, He prayed, "For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me" (John 17:8).

Because the prophets represented the Lord, He expected His people to obey their words and heed their warnings. If God would hold His people accountable for not obeying the words of His prophets, how much more might He do so with those who reject the words of Jesus (see Heb. 2:2-4)?

6. Why did the Lord expect His people to listen to the prophets?

The Tests of a True Prophet

Deuteronomy 18:20-22, KJV

20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22, NIV

²⁰"But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."

²¹You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" ²²If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

After explaining the necessity of listening to a prophet,

Moses anticipated the question of how they could know if a prophet was speaking for the Lord. The first test consisted of whether or not he claimed to speak in the name of the Lord. The people were to impose a death sentence on anyone who claimed to speak on behalf of another god (see Jer. 23:13).

We know from the later history of Israel that false prophets arose in Israel in the name of the Lord and tried to lead them astray (Jer. 23:23-32). Even if prophets were not as obvious as promoting idolatry, their words might still contradict other commands of God and thus reveal He had not sent them.

Moses gave Israel a second test to discern the genuineness of a prophet. The predictions of one sent from the Lord would happen precisely as predicted. Since many Old Testament prophets foretold the future in their warnings to the people, the people could examine their authenticity based on the accuracy of their predictions. A true prophet would have a perfect record in foretelling the future. A false prophet might get a few things right in his prophecies, but one sent by the Lord as His spokesperson would be 100 percent accurate in all he said about the future.

Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel prophesied about events in the years and decades ahead of them as well as about events that are still future in our time. Daniel's prophecy concerning Babylon and Belshazzar, for example, came true hours after he informed the king of his impending doom (Dan. 5:24-30). Daniel's prophecies regarding the nations in chapter 2 and 7 came to pass with such accuracy in the centuries after he lived that many critics refuse to believe he wrote them in the sixth century B.C.

Even today, the unfailing accuracy of biblical prophecies verifies Scripture as the Word of God.

7. *What were the tests of whether or not a prophet truly spoke for the Lord?*

8. *What was to be the fate of false prophets?*

Our First Priority

Jasmine reached to turn off the alarm, then grabbed her cell phone and started rolling through social media. Meanwhile, her Bible sat on the nightstand unopened. She continually wondered why she kept making wrong decisions in her life. Later that day, while talking to her father, he asked, “When was the last time you let God speak to you through His Word, the Bible?” Jasmine couldn’t give a definite answer.

In the evening, when Jasmine returned home, she noticed that she had some emails on her laptop. Jasmine took her laptop to bed, read emails, then watched the latest episode of her favorite TV series. Before she knew it, it was after midnight, and she really needed to get some sleep. Jasmine went another day without taking time to listen to God through His Word.

After Deborah reached to turn off her alarm, she got out of bed and fixed a cup of coffee. With her coffee in one hand and her Bible in the other, she sat at her kitchen table and allowed God to speak to her. She felt refreshed after being assured that God would give her strength to get through her trials at work. She knew that God’s grace would be sufficient for her. When she came home from work, Deborah checked her emails, then turned on her laptop to play last week’s sermon from her church. Deborah fell asleep meditating on God’s message through her pastor’s sermon.

Jasmine and Deborah desire to have a close relationship with God, but Deborah’s walk with God is growing because she has chosen to make listening to Him her first priority. Jasmine struggles because she’s easily distracted by other things. Their hearts are right, but their results are different.

9. *What gets our priority more than spending time with God in our daily lives?*

10. *Is spending time with God a priority in your life? Explain your answer.*

11. *How can we make spending time with God a priority in our lives?*

Stopping All Static and Interference

When I am calling family or friends from overseas, there is always difficulty hearing the other person. Sometimes, I even have to hang up and call back to get a clearer reception.

Similarly, we often have difficulty hearing God and need to make adjustments in order to hear Him speak to us. We may have to remove ourselves from a particular location to miss the static of the world over God's voice. Or we may have to hang up and start over to get rid of our roaming thoughts that interfere with us giving God our full attention.

► *What static or interference keeps you from giving God your full attention? What can you do to stop this static or interference the next time you want to pay attention to God's voice?*

KEY VERSE

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

—Deuteronomy 18:15, NIV

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

—Deuteronomy 18:15, KJV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of March 8 through March 14

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross devotionals* on these passages.)

Mon. Hebrews 11:23-31—Rahab Rewarded for Her Faithfulness.

Tues. Luke 18:35-42—Jesus Heals Blind Man from Jericho.

Wed. Joshua 5:8-12—Enjoying the Manna and Local Produce.

Thurs. Joshua 6:6-14—Marching around the City of Jericho.

Fri. Joshua 2:15-24—Rahab and Spies Confirm Rescue Plan.

Sat. Joshua 6:22-25—Rahab Saved While Jericho Is Destroyed.

Sun. Joshua 5:13—6:5, 15-16, 20—Joshua's Successful Conquest of Jericho.