



Lesson 5 | The Prophet Like Moses | 1/6/2021

Near the end of Moses' life, God promised: *"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you—I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him"* (Deut 18:15-18). But by Moses' death, no prophet had come: *"But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face"* (Deut 34:10). Furthermore, the Old Testament does not record that this particular prophet *ever appeared*.

At the time of Jesus' coming, the Jews were still looking for this "Prophet" promised to Moses – and to the nation. Religious leaders asked John, *"Are you the Prophet?"* (John 1:21) and he said that he was not. When Jesus appeared and started performing miracles, many recognized Him as the prophet: *"Therefore when the people saw the sign which he had performed, they said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world'"* (John 6:14). Even at His arrival to Jerusalem, the crowds said, *"This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee"* (Matt 21:11).

But what did it mean that **a prophet would come**? A **prophet** is a messenger sent by God and who speaks for God. God said that *"I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."* This makes the role of a prophet who is from God Himself as an inspired messenger (c.f. 2Tim 3:15). Further, prophets called people to repentance and foretold the future. And often, prophets were killed for their message. And this is what we will see fulfilled in Jesus' life.

Jesus of Nazareth interacted with many people who saw Him as a prophet. The Samaritan woman whom Jesus encountered was astonished at the ability of Jesus to speak concerning the events and conditions of her life. *"'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet'"* (John 4:19). This woman embraced the idea that Jesus' power to "see" was due to the fact that He was a prophet.

Jesus was recognized as a great prophet that had risen up among Israel. When Jesus entered the small village of Nain, a widow whose only son had died went to Him. After Jesus raised her son from the dead, the people became afraid *"and they glorified God, saying that a great prophet is risen up among us;"* and *"That God has visited his people"* (Luke 7:16). The news spread all about the region and people recognized Him to manifest the power of God as did Elijah and the great Israelite prophets. When Herod Antipas heard of His fame, he feared John the Baptist had risen from the dead; but others said, *"That it is Elias [the New Testament form of Elijah]. And others said, 'That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets'"* (Mark 6:15).

Jesus acknowledged that He was indeed "The" Prophet: So, Jesus answered them and said, *"My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me"* (John 7:16). Jesus said further: *"When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and I do nothing on my own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught me"* (John 8:28). Jesus also said, *"For I did not speak on my own initiative, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore, the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me"* (John 12:49-50). Again, *"He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's [words] who sent me"* (John 14:24). This self-assessment was evident at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. After reading the prophet Isaiah, Jesus declared, *"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."* When the crowd began to wonder, *"Is not this Joseph's son?"* Jesus replied, *"Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country"* (Luke 4:21, 22, 24).

In actions, Jesus acted as the prophet. The prophet would not only **forth tell** the words of God but **foretell** the predictions or prophecies from God. Jesus *foretold* the future when He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem. *"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written"* (Luke 21:20-22). This event was fulfilled in



A.D. 70. Also, He *spoke forth* the truths of God in His Sermon on the Mount. "Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them" (Matt 5:1-2).

After the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus His disciples proclaimed Jesus the Prophet. The Apostle Peter said, "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brothers... And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people'" (Acts 3:22,23). And the writer of Hebrews said, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world" (1:1-2).

Hebrews 1:1-2 begins a drawn contrast to show us the superiority of Jesus. That contrast begins with showing that God spoke in the old covenant and how He speaks today. In the past, God spoke by prophets then but in "these last days" He has spoken by His Son. While all prophets were not God's final means of speaking, they pointed to how God would give His final Word—in the God-man Christ Jesus – who would be the final prophet. Yet, we should not read the contrast between Jesus and the old covenant prophets as absolute. Jesus replaced the prophets not because He is entirely different; He replaces them because He is the Prophet par excellence, the fulfillment of all that the prophets anticipated. Not only does He speak to us the words of God, but He is the very Word of God made flesh (John 1:1-14). He not only teaches us the wise way in which to live, but He is the incarnation of God's wisdom (1Cor. 1:30).

Further, there are many life events that parallel Jesus to Moses the prophet. For example, both were miraculously saved from death as an infant: Moses in the basket in the Nile (Exo 1, 2) and Jesus taken to Egypt (Matt 2). In Matthew 4, Jesus is tempted in the desert for forty days and nights and Moses led Israel in 40 years of wandering. Moses confronted Pharaoh (Exo 5-12), while Jesus confronted the Devil Himself (as well as Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Herod Antipas, and Pilate). Moses was God's mouthpiece who delivered the law at Mount Sinai while Jesus delivered His law in the Sermon on the Mount. Moses performed miracles to confirm God's messenger—Jesus healed many, walked on water, and raised the dead to confirm He was the messenger as Son of God. Moses entered God's presence and "the skin of his face shone" (Exo 34:29) when he came off the mount. Likewise, the Savior was transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration, and "his face did shine as the sun" (Matt 17:2).

Christ is superior to the old covenant prophets in the sense that He is uniquely the subject and object of prophecy. Prophets spoke of the prophet himself and were not the objects of their prophecy. But Jesus Christ was, in prophesying, the subject of the message, the Mediator of a new and better covenant that actually accomplishes the atonement necessary to secure the eternal inheritance of God's people (Heb. 9:15). The Old Covenant was only a shadow of this better covenant mediated by a better prophet who delivered better promises.

Jesus accomplished the work of a prophet through His earthly teaching ministry and by speaking through the Apostles. Now that the Apostolic era has ended, new revelation from God has ceased, but by His Spirit, Jesus is illuminating the meaning of the Apostolic Word—the Scriptures—to us. We must have the help of the Spirit of Christ to understand Scripture, so we must ask Him to bless all of our studies of His Word.

Next Week | Lesson 6 | The King Like David.