



Lesson 1 March 6th, 2021

Moses: Prophet of Deliverance

Study Scripture – Deuteronomy 18:15-22

Background Scripture – Exodus 12:28-50; Deuteronomy 18

Key Verse:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen; to him you shall listen.

Deuteronomy 18:15

INTRODUCTION

The age in which we live has left us with a distressing problem for events which have occurred have led us to where we ask the question as to whether or not there is anyone we can trust anymore. In fact, one of Solomon's Proverbs stated,

“Every man will proclaim his own goodness, but the faithful man, who can find”.

When we today ask the question of who we can trust, the trustworthy someone we know who is always going to do what is true and right, someone that we can always count on, we have to turn to this Study Text for the answer.

One writer in a tongue-in-cheek comment tells us about an interesting experience he had. **“I saw a little plaque in a café recently which said, “In God we trust, all others pay cash”.**

But we know that the Scriptures tell us about someone we can trust and in this section of Scripture called the book of Deuteronomy we see the answer we need in the messages delivered by Moses just before he died.

The older generation of the nation of Israel had died in the wilderness because of their sins and continued disobedience but the younger generation was now encamped on the plains of Moab ready to enter the Promised Land after the nation's 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

God had promised them the Land because of the unconditional promise made to Abraham, but it was made clear that they would not enjoy the land for their enjoyment was conditional on obedience to certain basic principles which Moses now outlines.

Moses the great leader of the nation had stressed the importance of the law and he had gone over that in great detail. He had instructed the nation about the major leadership figures that would arise. So Moses spoke of the figure of the King (chapter 17), the Priest, (eight verses in chapter 18), and the Prophet and that instruction covers verses 9 through to the end of the chapter.

The epic journey of the Children of Israel continued after their deliverance from slavery in Egypt by the awesome hand of God. Their liberation was witness to His power and marked them as the recipients of His redemptive love. God led them through the Red Sea not only to escape, but also for them to witness the destruction of their enemy.

At Mount Sinai, God made a covenant with the people, one that came with immense blessings for obedience, but also a curse for disobedience.

While the people enthusiastically accepted the terms of the covenant and eagerly looked forward to the Promised Land, their story is very similar to our own, in that it is a story of struggle, the flesh warring against the spirit. In actuality the battle was not so much to do with our external enemies as it was to do with self.

Despite their miraculous release from Egypt, they were still in captivity in a sense, as they carried in their hearts the gods of Egypt. This could not continue, for God is a jealous God.

The first commandment they had received was to forsake all other gods – the Lord demanded total allegiance and was desirous and worthy of their worship. In order to truly worship God, it was necessary to tear down every idol. The worship of God was to be rendered by a sanctified people in a sanctified place, at a sanctified time.

Due to disobedience however, the relatively short trip to the Promised Land, became a forty-year saga, a sordid story of a people falling in and out of favour with God.

While the book of Exodus chronicles the journey to the Promised Land, the book of Deuteronomy is Moses' final word to the people. Moses would not be entering the Promised Land with the people because though he was the appointed leader and a prophet, he was not allowed because of his actions recorded in Numbers 20:12.

The great Moses and prophet of God stands as a lesson for us for even he was not allowed to speak falsely or to speak in God's name when God had not spoken.

Any such action would be undertaken at the pain of death.

This really was meant to discourage the real temptation to use prophet status in the wrong way. The leader and the prophet had always to faithfully relay the words of God and not speak on his own but only speak the words that God sends.

Before in this Study in the instruction of Moses and we examine the biblical definition of a prophet we must bear in mind that we will be looking at the prophetic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is also the only One who fulfills perfectly the role of the prophet, for the prophet is an individual anointed to represent God with men. Jesus would of course fulfill the other role of Priest, for the Priest represents men before God, as well as the role of King, the perfect ruler of men.



To properly understand the role of a prophet and to remove the confusion about the role of prophets today we should examine the situation in which the nation of Israel found itself. They were about to enter into the land of Canaan and come in direct contact with the Canaanite nations that had lived in the land of Palestine for maybe even thousands of years, for they greeted Abraham when he first arrived there. They were decadent and totally immoral, totally corrupt, full of iniquity people, and we know this from the story of Sodom and Gomorrah about the ones that lived in that land. God however in His mercy had refused to have Abram and his descendants take over the land for they would go into captivity in Egypt for 400 years until the iniquity of the Amorites” was ***filled up to the full***”.

Remember that these people had **some** light and God waited until the nations in Canaan responded to the light that they had. They had the witness of Abraham and his descendants. They had the witness of men like Melchizedek, the Gentile priest- king, who lived in ancient city of Jerusalem. But they were so awful that they refused to respond to the great deal of light that they had, and God waited patiently.

This act of God alone should make us turn away from sin, for we know that there will be a day of reckoning for sinners. One writer disavows us of any foolish ideas we might have about the people of Canaan. He states:

“There is an ancient Phoenician historian by the name of Philo who tells us a great deal about the Canaanite culture. Until recently nobody believed him because he described their extreme corruption in such lurid terms that it was difficult to believe that any such society could exist. But recently archaeologists have produced entire libraries from Canaanite nations which tell us that the situation was even worse than Philo depicted it. It was a society which was ravaged by venereal disease. They worshiped sex. And they were totally caught up in the dark arts and occultism.

So the Lord forewarned His people. *“When you come into the land have nothing to do with them. because they are guilty of detestable things”.*

He recognizes that these Canaanites will not operate on the policy of “live and let live” but will propagate their teachings so as to infect all of Israel. The term Moses uses which is translated “detestable” is a word which means in Hebrew something you long after and something you loath. There is a strange ambiguity about it, and I am sure the Spirit of God had Moses choose this term for a particular reason.

It is this kind of attitude which we all experience toward occult things. They both hold a fascination for us, and they frighten us. There is an allure there, and yet we feel uneasy. I can never walk by a bookstore with books on black magic or any occult activity without wanting to pick them up and read them. It is fascinating, and yet there is also something in me which abhors that sort of thing. It is that fascination which catches people. They get involved with Ouija boards, Tarot cards, palmistry, astrology-- because it is so fascinating.

The Scriptures tell us that God has put eternity into the minds of men, and there is a desire in all of us to know what the future holds, what is beyond the world of the seen and known. We are intrigued and fascinated by it. Yet at the same time there is something detestable and



abhorrent about it. But sometimes our fascination overrides our abhorrence and we become involved. And then we are trapped. And it is so difficult to extricate ourselves! That is why God says, “Don't learn from them”.

We therefore need to know whether somebody is telling us the truth about the world, about God, and about human nature. So we shouldn't be surprised when people go off on a tangent and are always stressing things about the supernatural and telling you all about the future for this is fascinating to many leaders and many people who listen with great expectation. That is all wrong, but it is human nature and so people pay a great deal of attention about the future and how to gain esoteric knowledge.

So we all still faced the question. But remember God says no to that kind of behaviour. Remember that Moses is not simply telling the people to live in a closed community which does not interact with the cultures around it for there had to be witnessing to them even though it is required to analyze and to point out the misdirection in other religious traditions.

The issue is that they are not to imitate the abhorrent practices of the nations.

The sad thing is that most people have always had hybrid religious **structures** and behaviour. This was the case in Israel when they lived in pagan lands and the prophets consistently attacked these deviations from the truth. This is the case today for there are hybrid forms of Christianity and indigenous spirituality which have developed in response to practices of colonization and slavery which have led people develop them in order to protect themselves. We therefore have to be careful and sensitive to these developments as we witness to others about the plain truth of the Gospel which alone will save.

The abominations that Moses condemned are listed in the previous verses to our Study. Moses made it clear that Yahweh specifically prohibits passing children through the fire, the practice of child sacrifice. Children are important to the Lord and they should never be abused.

We will look at the meaning of some of the terms Moses used to warn the nation of Israel.

Divination is a general term for users of occult practices, divining the future by many technical means such as tea leaves, reading palms, charting the stars, looking deeply into a crystal ball, using these means to decide or determine the future.

The word “witchcraft” is a broad word which described the several kinds of occult activities making contact with the demonic or dark spiritual world. One writer points out **“the same word used in Ezekiel 21:21 refers to the practice of whirling in a quiver and deciding the answer to the question by the first arrow thrown out”.**

And he adds

“There is a modern revival of witchcraft, or Wicca, and many people claim that “white” witchcraft (as opposed to “black” witchcraft) is a use of spiritual powers for good, as well as being a more feminist, ecology friendly understanding of God and spirituality. But whether a witch claims to be “white” or “black” they are still using occultic powers.



Some claim that white or right-hand path witches are in the majority today. They worship elements and nature deities, the “Mother Goddess”, Gaia, Ashtarte, Isis, Osiris, and a host of other names for the Goddess... they deny the existence of Satan, calling him an invention of the Christian church”.

“Sorcerer” the word normally used for an astrologer in the Old Testament. One writer describes them as follows:

“Those who by means of drugs, herbs, perfumes, and so forth, pretended to bring certain celestial influences to their aid... the term is used in Micah 5: 12 for some such material as drugs or herbs used superstitiously to produce magical effects”.

... or one who interprets omens.... One writer describes this as follows,

“the word comes from the root “to hiss” or “to whisper” and refers to psychics and fortunetellers who use “aids” other than naturally created things to gain knowledge, tend the future, and cast spells”.

“...one who casts a spell...”, which means one who binds, who practices voodoo.

“...or a medium... One writer tells us,

‘the idea is that the medium becomes the receptacle for something else. He or she is merely the shell which contains another personality.

Another writer describes the medium,

“the idea is of someone who “stands between” the physical world and the psychic world; they channel knowledge from the psychic world into the physical world”.

... Or one who conjures up spells.... One writer states, “This is literally, “A charmer of charms” and refers to those who cast spells or charms for good or evil upon others with spiritual powers apart from God.

... or a spiritist, one writer describes, “Literally, this word refers to the “knowing ones” -- those who claim unique occult or psychic knowledge and powers-- such as those on the many psychic hotlines that one can pay to call”.

...Or one who calls up the dead.... One writer states, “This refers to the practice of necromancy, which is the conjuring up or the contacting of the dead...

This refers to “One who investigates, looks into, and seeks information from the dead (Kalland)”.

The stress and warning therefore is that there is spiritual alternative to God in the ancient world as well as in the modern world. We like those practices like astrology, Tarot cards, I-Ching, numerology, and similar practices. But it is quite clear that Yahweh tells the nation of Israel where they will find spiritual direction and because of the many temptations they will face Yahweh will raise up a prophet for them.

It is very interesting to note that Moses uses every word in the Hebrew vocabulary to describe occult phenomena. He does not leave out any word at all in this description about the practices of the occult. The unmistakable stress therefore is that the occult is forbidden. The people of God must have nothing to do with those things. There are ways that people have used to try to get knowledge, but these are off limits.



God made you and He understands you and what you are created for and so God tells us not to try to discover truth in those things that one might see for they are limited and are Demonic. There is no better way than the way that God has provided.

We like Israel have a covenant with God. There are terms to this Covenant. Whether young or old we can understand the nature of the Covenant and what will happen because of disobedience.

There are many lessons to be learned so let us be attentive to the word as we listen to God's call to remember the words of Moses the prophet of deliverance.

It is very dangerous for people especially children when we break out the magic tricks and games which involve supernatural worlds and powers and try to tap into a source of spiritual power that is real. But yet it is evil and extremely dangerous. These things are an abomination to the Lord, and He does not regard these actions lightly. He did not treat it lightly in the ancient world and He does not regard it as something lightly now.

Christians therefore must have nothing to do with the powers of darkness and must always reject them even though we live in a culture that is becoming more and more accepting of the occult ideas and practices and intolerance of biblical Christianity. We must not fool ourselves for in our day spiritualistic sounding things such as astrology, teacup reading, and those ancient practices are things that are against the instructions which God gave Israel. Injunctions given by God are ignored and therefore forbidden practices are common among even those in the church. But remember that we are to be blameless and keep from detestable things.

THE TEXT

Verse 15. There have been many people who have failed to predict the future. But there were some that were able to predict the future and that is the way that you tell a true prophet from a false prophet, namely, by looking at the results of his or her prophecy. Note therefore that the "words" of the prophet were most important.

Exodus 7:1-2 spells out the role of the prophet and his importance. In verse 1 we learn that Jehovah told Moses that He had made Moses as god to Pharaoh. Then God states that Aaron his brother will be Moses' prophet. Moses would speak all that God had commanded Moses because he was as God, and Aaron his brother would then speak to Pharaoh the words that Moses had given to him. Hence, we have the pattern that Moses is as God and Aaron is Moses' prophet and Aaron is the one who speaks to Pharaoh and brings the word of God to Pharaoh. The prophet therefore has a work to do and that work is to bring the word of God to men. This word from God is clearly new revelation. It is different work from the work of a teacher who teaches what is contained in the Bible.

Obviously one can therefore test the words of the prophet by the kind of information that they bring. If one claims to be a prophet and do not bring new revelation or some significant



revelation, this is clearly not a prophet. It should be clear to us that when God speaks this revelation is significant and is not something trivial. God's communication is divine and reflect the character of God and His words.

In the New Testament the word used for a prophet is one that “speak forth” and so the prophet receives divine revelation from God directly and gives it to men. He might receive it in different ways as by vision, or dream like Daniel.

Some therefore believe that there are no prophets today for revelation has ceased. They believe that we do not really need a prophet for if we needed prophets God would give us prophets. They are not necessary today **because** we have already divine revelation. All we really need therefore is illumination to understand the written revelation and so therefore no Seminary or Bible College or school can train prophets, but they can train teachers, evangelists, pastor- teachers, and gifted men.

As the mouthpiece of God, the prophet offers divine revelations with two contents. The first is predictive revelation, such as is found in Acts 11:27-28. When prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch one of them named Agabus brought the new revelation from God to the brethren that there would be a great famine all over the world. This was clearly a particular and specific bad time and it took place in the reign of Claudius.

This same man prophesied as recorded in Acts chapter 21:10-11. He took the apostle Paul's belt and bound his own hands and feet and told the brethren that the Holy Spirit was going to do the same thing to Paul, and this would happen when he went up to Jerusalem. The brethren therefore begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem but Paul was not persuaded by what was going to happen to him. Paul went to Jerusalem and as prophesied he was put in prison and bound

When we read Psalm 22 it is stated that Messiah would cry with on the Cross and it came to pass for the Lord Jesus Christ uttered those very words in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

There is another element to prophecy and that is moral revelation for when truth comes from God it speaks about the present as well as the future and the prophecies address the moral condition of the people pointing out their sins through prophecy and the need for repentance, confession, and return to the Lord in order to avoid judgment coming on them.

We therefore point out that though believers will look at the book of Revelation and develop all kinds of charts and try to fit the events in the book of Revelation into their charts, that might be useful, but we will really benefit from the lessons in Revelation if they strengthen us in our spiritual life today, comfort, edify and console us, and convict us of our sins, for the words are designed to cause us to think of the Lord Jesus Christ more closely in the present time.

In our Study therefore is Moses clearly states that God would raise up a prophet like him inspired by the Holy Spirit. He would be like Moses for he would come to give the people of



Israel spiritual light men and direction so that they would not need to rely on divination, sorcery, and the occult practices. These disciplines are false and have no power and they reveal no truth.

He will command attention and the people should listen to him. The word which means hear (*sama*) implies obedience, for this prophet will bring words from Yahweh.

He would come from the Covenant people and so he will be faithful to the covenant like Moses and speak what Yahweh tells him. Like Moses he would be a truth teller. He would be like a prosecuting attorney from God for he would be concerned with truth in the present.

This brings us to a look at what Moses was like for the credentials of the true prophet would be similar to Moses credentials. First, He would of course be a Jew like Moses for God intended to raise Him up out of their own people. He would not be a stranger. This credential would be similar to the credentials for picking the King for the king could not come from the Gentile nations, for they were outside the Covenant. All the prophets, the priests, and the king were to be Jews for the only true prophets were Jewish.

Second, to be like Moses this prophet that God would send would like Moses to have to stand between God and man and speak the words of God. God spoke face-to-face with Moses and therefore Moses was God's spokesman, speaking God's words. This prophet upon would be similar for he would talk to God face-to-face.

Verse 16. This aspect had to be stressed for there was a time when the nation stood before God in Horeb or Sinai (the mountain was Sinai and the neighbouring wilderness was designated as Horeb) and Yahweh spoke to them in a loud voice while the mountain burned with fire. The people thought that they were going to die by the fire which would consume them.

They begged Moses to ask God not to speak to them anymore for they would die and so they asked Moses to serve as their intermediary to go before God and to hear His words and to then tell them all that Yahweh their God would tell him. Then they would hear it and they would do it. (Exodus 20: 18-21).

This prophet that God would send would be able to represent them before God and communicate what God the Father wanted them to know. That was why later when John the Baptist came and spoke to the people calling on them to stop their sins and to repent and be baptized, the scribes and Pharisees asked John whether he was Messiah, or the promised prophet, thereby having the authority and power to speak that way to the people.

Verse 17. Yahweh had responded to what the people said. Yahweh told Moses that what the people had said was good. They were right in saying that they did not have the ability to hear the word of God directly.



Verse 18. God therefore in response to the specific request of the people would send a prophet in whom He had put His words. He would put His words in his mouth. He would tell them everything that God commanded him to say. The prophet's responsibility would be to speaking to words that Yahweh had given him.

He would not simply talk about Israel's glorious future, but he would talk about the need for the people to be faithful and obedient to the Covenant just as Moses had been saying.

Verse 19. He will point out God's position. The prophet would be able to bear the stress of that position. Yahweh will regard them as responsible for obeying the word that the prophet gives them. They had to obey the words of the prophet for it was the words that God had given him.

If the words of the so-called modern prophets' conflict in any way with the word of God, you are told plainly not to listen to them.

Verses 20-22. The call to remember is a call to obedience. It is quite clear that God knew that false prophets would speak to Israel in the name of other gods as well as speaking words which they say Yahweh gave them but which in fact he did not give them.

There are prophets that will presume to speak in God's name and will therefore speak presumptuously, in fact giving out their personal opinions or speaking the words that Satan gave them to say. Some prophets would speak in the name of other gods. Those prophets should die.

It would be easy relatively speaking to tell if a prophets is speaking in the name of the pagan gods like Baal or some other pagan deity or even some of the modern named gods, but it might be more difficult to assess if a prophet is speaking in the name of the Lord presumptuously. The way to test those is by their accuracy.

If the thing that they are saying or claiming does not happen then the prophet would be in fact making false prophecies and they are no longer therefore to be regarded as a prophet of God.

Scripture tells us that a true prophet does not seek to be a prophet for they know that that is difficult job to hold. Moses and Jeremiah for example protested at their appointment but they could not avoid God's call. When Elijah tried to escape God's presence it did not work. Jonah ran into the same problem. Isaiah only requested to stand for God after he was exposed to the awful majesty of God.

Like Moses the true prophet does not seek self-promotion and riches. Elisha's behaviour in 2nd Kings 5 tells us that. So we can see from Scriptures much of what is expected from a prophet. The prophet that God would eventually send would be perfect in every respect. One writer warns and laments:

“Not too long ago there was a great emphasis on the “prophets” in some Christian circles, and many would prophesy that something would happen-and it did not. However, those people



excused their false prophecies by saying they were “learning” and “experimenting” and “under grace”, therefore we should not regard them as false prophets.

While it is true that one may well learn how to flow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, no one should say something is from God unless they are assured that it is-- and if they are wrong, then their own discernment and ability to hear from God are rightly called into question. Besides, if prophets were held to this standard under the Old Covenant, are we to have a lesser standard under the New Covenant? Is there more of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit now, or less? Under the New Covenant, are we more intimately guided by God, or less? It is true we are under grace, so we no longer stone false prophets-- yet we shouldn't respect them or give them the title or position of “prophet” if they are false prophets”.

God has instructed us not to be afraid of false prophets and we are to always guard against emphasizing the prophetic from the mouth of people instead of concentrating on studying and emphasizing the word of God.

So who speaks for God? The Scriptures always points to Jesus, our great prophet, priest, and King. Hebrews 2 tells us that He is not ashamed to call those that come to Him as brethren and He will proclaim the name of the Father to the brethren in the midst of the congregation.

When one studies the Scriptures, one would see that the prophets of the Old Testament are really types of Christ because of the office. What happened to them illustrates what can happen to Jesus when He came to earth.

Moses and the Old Testament prophets called Israel back into a relationship characterized by obedience. As such Moses was a prophet of deliverance. He predicted to Israel exactly what they would go through in future. Everything he said came to pass perfectly. He gave the people the word of God, and he stood in the gap between them and God. He tried in every way to reconcile them to God. He called on them to act in accordance with the Law and to make sure that their heart was turned toward a loving relationship with their Creator.

He therefore was first and foremost the ultimate truth teller. He was a mediator. He told of the word of God reliably.

CONCLUSION

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ was identified as the Passover Lamb sacrificed for believers (1 Cor. 5:7; John 19:36, Ex. 12:46). By applying the blood of Christ to themselves, that is, trusting in Him who died in their place for their sin, Christians are spared from eternal death.

God wanted Israel to trust in the Messiah that had been sent to them but sadly only some of them responded to the words of Moses. They were quite willing to learn about Christ and asked John the Baptist as to whether he was in fact that prophet that Moses had promised. But even then, most of them did not listen to John when he called on them to repent and be baptized.



But some did. Those that did get spread the word about the Lord Jesus Christ and we thank them for this stalwart work that they had done for their work has benefited us.

Like the Children of Israel, we too are the people of God, and it is also for our own good that we take time to remember where we are coming from and what God has done for us, or we too will stray from the Covenant.

This prophet had a passion for God and for his people. He knew that this new generation would only survive and enjoy the Land if they were obedient to the Law of God and the terms of the Covenant. He knew that if they were disobedient, the Covenant would work against them, says one writer.

This writer therefore reminds us that the Book of Deuteronomy was a Book of reminding and a call for preparation. It was a call for the people to choose life.

Remembering the difficulties through which Moses worked we have to thank God the Father for the model He has given to us. Let us remember the great love of God and the work of the prophet of Deliverance.

Let us see today if we can begin to be grateful by remembering that it was by His strong hand that God brought us out of Egypt.

