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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Vezot Habracha – The Prophet Like Moses

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Vezot Habracha, which is Hebrew for “This is the blessing,” and it goes from Deuteronomy 33:1 to Deuteronomy 34:12.

This Torah Portion contains Moses’ final blessing upon each of the tribes of Israel and concludes with the death of Moses.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about the prophet like Moses.

Earlier in the book of Deuteronomy, we’re given a prophecy about a prophet like Moses who will arise from among Israel. This prophet is said to speak the very words of YHWH, and the people of God are instructed to obey Him (Deuteronomy 18:15-18).

In later Rabbinic Judaism, this prophecy is often interpreted to refer to a succession of prophets. That is to say, Israel is commanded to obey every prophet that God raises up in every generation, starting with Joshua. While it’s true that Israel was to heed the words of the prophets in every generation, the passage from Deuteronomy 18 appears to be speaking of a *specific* prophet. In fact, there is a clue that this is the case in this week’s Torah Portion:

Deuteronomy 34:9-10

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord [YHWH] had commanded Moses. **And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses**, whom the Lord [YHWH] knew face to face, **none like him** for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord [YHWH] sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

You’ll notice the passage says that there had not yet arisen a prophet “like Moses.” This is after Moses

died and *after* Joshua was already commissioned by Moses and filled with the spirit of wisdom as the new prophet who would lead Israel into the Promised Land. So, the idea that the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18 refers to every prophet in every generation starting with Joshua doesn't seem to add up. Joshua was a prophet, but apparently he wasn't the "prophet like Moses."

So, who is this prophet like Moses? Has He been revealed? Indeed, He has! In the Judaisms of the first century, on the basis of this prophecy in Deuteronomy 18, there was an expectation of a special Prophet who would come and perform amazing miracles like Moses. John the Baptist was asked if he was this Prophet in John 1:21 and 24, indicating that the Jews of this time were still anticipating the arrival of this Prophet.

The New Testament identifies Yeshua the Messiah with this prophecy in John 6:14. After Yeshua feeds the five thousand by multiplying the five barley loaves and two fish—an amazing miracle—the gospel records the people's reaction:

John 6:14

When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed **the Prophet** who is to come into the world!"

The people were referring to the promised prophet like Moses to come. Not so coincidentally, Moses was also known for miraculously providing food to large crowds.

In Matthew's gospel, during the Transfiguration, God Himself instructs the disciples to listen to Yeshua:

Matthew 17:5

Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; **listen to him.**"

This harkens back to the command to "listen" to the prophet like Moses who would arise from among the people of Israel. The Hebrew word used for "listen" in Deuteronomy 18:15 is *shema*, which means "hear and obey." The corresponding Greek word is *akouo*, which is how *shema* is translated in the Greek Septuagint. *Akouo* is the exact word used in Matthew 17:5. Thus, just as God commanded Israel to listen to the prophet like Moses, He commands Israel to listen to His Son.

Like Moses, Yeshua performed incredible miracles. Like Moses, Yeshua had a unique intimacy with God. And just like Moses was a redeemer of Israel, delivering them from slavery in Egypt, Yeshua is our ultimate redeemer, delivering us from slavery to sin and death through His work on the cross and His resurrection.

Yeshua is the Prophet like Moses.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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