

WAS JESUS THE PROPHET PREDICTED BY MOSES?

MESSIAH IN THE TORAH

It is believed that God predicted the coming of Jesus the supreme prophet in his book, the Law, the Law of Moses.

Let us examine the alleged prophecies about the coming of Jesus Christ in the Law.

God says in Deuteronomy 18 that we must never listen to a prophet who lies and errs in speaking for the divine. Yet he made a prophet of God of the deceiving prophet Balaam in the Book of Numbers. This cannot inspire confidence in the Law as evidence for Jesus or indeed any revelation.

* Numbers 24:17. “A star (Star) shall come forth out of Jacob, and a sceptre (Sceptre) shall rise out of Israel and shall crush all the corners of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.”

Alleged Fulfilment. The star is the star of Bethlehem which shone when Jesus was born and the scripture represents a ruler or a line of rulers. This prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The New Testament does not sanction this notion. David destroyed the Moabites which is said to have been the partial fulfilment of this verse.

The Truth. When the sceptre is a symbol of royal authority why cannot the star be a symbol for a glorious and special reign or heavenly person? And isn't it obvious and probable that the sceptre would come before Moab is destroyed and not centuries after it like Jesus, according to the gospels, did?

* Deuteronomy 18:15. A prophet like Moses will come whom the people must listen to.

Alleged Fulfilment. Jesus was a prophet like Moses the lawgiver who gave out new laws.

New Testament Interpretation. Jesus accused the Jews of not believing these words when they put no faith in him (John 5:46, 47). This was unfair of him for they believed the words referred to someone still to come. They are only a few words and make no clear mention of Jesus at all. Jesus was not a prophet like Moses for he didn't produce commandments on plates and go up hills to have visions of God and did not lead his people from enslavement in foreign land.

So Jesus was slandering the Jews. And yet it was an oracle from God according to John 12:44-50 for Jesus to make his slanderous accusation. Acts 3 agrees that it is about him. Apart from a couple of rabbis, the Jews had not considered any prophet that came before Christ to have been the promised prophet (page 31, The Case for Jesus the Messiah).

The Truth. Jesus claimed to be a prophet though he told lies in the name of God. The Law of Moses denounced everybody like that as a complete fraud (Deuteronomy 18). He was not the prophet like Moses.

The prophet could have been Joshua, who led Israel after Moses died. The Case for Jesus the Messiah objects that Joshua was not a prophet and that Moses had no prophet like himself even though Joshua was there (Deuteronomy 34:10). But Joshua could have become prophet after Moses died and God promised Joshua the same protection against error that Moses had (Joshua 1). And we are told that the Lord spoke to Joshua like he did to Moses (Joshua 5:2). Joshua got messages from angels (Joshua 5:13-15). God told Joshua that he would exalt him as he did Moses (Joshua 3:7). Joshua was already in command of Israel and ruled the priesthood (Joshua 3:7) so God can only mean that he is ordaining him to be the new Moses. Moses could say that a prophet as mighty as himself would come after him even if Joshua was not as good a prophet then for Joshua would be one later. God even gave new laws through Joshua – Joshua had to arrange the coming forward of Israel to be punished in a new way (Joshua 7:10-15). Joshua said when he realised he was dying, “And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. Know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one thing of them has failed” (Joshua 23:14). This emphasis shows that Joshua claimed to be the prophet promised by Moses. It is absurd to say it means all the promises expect that one especially when Joshua never denies that he was the prophet and says that he was as good as Moses. Joshua did not add much to the Law of Moses except a rule where half the tribe of Manasseh had to dwell (Joshua 22:7) and some additions to the law that allowed people to avenge themselves and their victims (Joshua 20) and gave a day of purification by divine command (Joshua 7:13) and he forbade the rebuilding of Jericho by a divine curse (Joshua 6:26) similar to those used by Moses to enforce the Law. The Law claimed to be everlasting and perfect so Joshua could still have been the new Moses if he never added anything. Moses did not give regulations he only revealed them and Joshua under the spirit of prophecy merely supported that revelation. Joshua and Moses saw God in the tabernacle

(Deuteronomy 31:14,15), which suggests that God was going to make Joshua the new Moses. No other prophet had such an experience so no other prophet could have been the fulfilment of Moses' prediction.

Joshua was mediator of the covenant like Moses (Joshua 22-24) for Moses only told the people what the covenant was and led them to accept it and Joshua led them to accept it again after they had apostatised (Joshua 7).

Deuteronomy 34:9, 10 says that Moses died and Joshua son of Nun was filled with his spirit and Israel listened to Joshua as they did Moses and then that no prophet like Moses WHO EQUALLED HIM IN WONDERS AND MIRACLES had yet appeared! This does not refute the idea that Joshua was the Prophet for it only says that no prophet like Moses came doing miracles. All Moses said when he prophesied the coming of the prophet like him was that the prophet would have God's words in his mouth which evidently indicates that the prophet will teach like him.

Deuteronomy purports to have been written during and soon after the time of Moses. So it could be that Joshua had not become the prophet at the time these verses were allegedly written but soon would. The record about there being no prophet like Moses since his death would not mean that Joshua could not become the Prophet afterwards. And Joshua did a better miracle than all of those of Moses and Jesus put together (Joshua 10). He stopped the sun and moon in their tracks. The whole world saw it which if true made it better not just because of the vast power but because everybody was a witness.

If the Jews did not recognise Joshua as the Prophet would prove nothing. It was scripture not tradition that the Bible says is the authority in religion and it continually laments the stiff-necks of the people. When the Jews all believed in the time of King Artaxerxes after Ezra and Nehemiah died that there could be no more scripture (Against Apion, Flavius Josephus, Chapter 1, Section 8) it shows they probably thought the Prophet had come and gone. When the Torah stressed that nobody was to add to its teaching it would seem that the only person who could do that would have to be Joshua for he was authorised and chosen for leading the people by Moses himself. Otherwise anybody could have claimed to be the new lawgiver.

Ezekiel added some things to the Law and could have been the prophet for he gave a revelation to restore the religion of Moses from which Israel had apostatised. He predicted the Messiah which would not disprove Joshua's being the prophet.

Whoever the Prophet was he was not Jesus Christ for Jesus never beat Joshua in miracles and never made the Law more complete by adding new laws and gave no evidence of prophetic ability and he never led Israel back to God for he drove it to reject him.

The most basic prophecy of the Bible about the Messiah is that he will be a prophet. When Jesus failed to be a good prophet and gave us no reason to consider him to be a prophet it follows that even if he did manage to fulfil all the prophecies he slipped up in the most important one and so the Old Testament rejects him as the Messiah. The theology of the Church with its good insights did not come from him – he never even said what he meant by God. It was thought out by men so there is nothing impressive about Jesus at all.

The differences between Moses and the other prophets was that he dealt with God face to face and was the mediator of the covenant between God and Israel and was the lawgiver and did great miracles. So the prophet he said would come would have to do the same things. We have seen that Joshua did all these things.

The Law of Moses is the most important section in the Old Testament. If you have to do without any of the Old Testament it must not be the Law. Jesus is supposed to be the supreme revelation from Heaven and when he is not spoken of in the Law that is a very loud warning bell. If the Law is from God then Jesus was a false prophet.