

than that of any other prophet in the entire OT. He is also entrusted with greater responsibility: 'if there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the LORD' (Num. 12:6-8; cf. Deut. 34:10).

While there are other prophets in the Pentateuch, such as Abraham, Miriam (Exod. 15:20), Balaam (Num. 22:38) and the seventy elders who prophesied (Num. 11:25), no prophet is equal to Moses. However, Moses promises that another prophet like him will arise: 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren - him you shall heed' (Deut. 18:15). Although this promise was partially fulfilled in many subsequent OT prophets who spoke the words of the Lord, it was ultimately a messianic prediction fulfilled in Christ (John 6:14; 7:40; Acts 3:22; 7:37).

The expectation that one day all God's people would prophesy

The initial group of secondary prophets (the 70 elders who prophesied with Moses, Num. 11:25) provides a pattern for subsequent bands of prophets (see below) and also encourages an expectation that one day the gift of prophecy would be widely distributed among God's people: Moses says, 'Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!' (Num. 11:29). Here Moses longs not just for a widespread prophetic gift but even more for the widespread personal relationship to God of which that gift would be a sign, for he knows by experience that prophets walk close to God. This expectation is restated in Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-29), and finds initial fulfilment in the NT *church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-18).

The problem of false prophets

Since a true prophet can speak only God's message, not his or her own, it follows that a false prophet is one who has no message from God but presumes to speak in God's name anyway (Deut. 18:20). If such false prophecy is joined with encouragement to serve other gods (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20), the prophet 'shall

be put to death' (Deut. 13:5). However, contrary to much popular misunderstanding, there was no death penalty simply for speaking a false prophecy; Deuteronomy 18:20 requires capital punishment only for one who speaks a message God has not given and 'speaks in the name of other gods' (so the Hebrew text and the LXX, contrary to modern versions that translate the Hebrew *waw* as 'or').

False prophets are recognized both by their advocacy of other gods and by the failure of their predictions to come true (Deut. 13:2-3, 5; 18:22). Such false prophets may even work 'a sign or wonder', but their false doctrine reveals their true nature. By allowing false prophets to exist in Israel, the Lord is 'testing' his people, to know whether they love the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul (Deut. 13:3).

Prophecy and prophets in the post-Pentateuchal historical books and the writing prophets

Established, primary prophets

Just as in the Pentateuch Moses was established as the primary prophet of God, so in subsequent OT history there are prophets such as Samuel (1 Sam. 3:20), Gad (1 Sam. 22:5), Nathan (2 Sam. 7:2), *Elijah (1 Kgs. 18:22), *Elisha (2 Kgs. 2:15), Isaiah (2 Kgs. 20:1), Jeremiah (2 Chr. 36:12) and other writing prophets, who are established and recognized as prophets of the Lord. The pattern for such a recognized and prominent role was seen in Samuel when he was 'established as a prophet of the LORD' (1 Sam. 3:20), and the LORD 'let none of his words fall to the ground' (v. 19). It is frequently noted that such primary prophets were attested by miracles (1 Kgs. 18:24, 39; 2 Kgs. 5:3; see *Signs and wonders), true predictions (1 Sam. 9-10; 1 Kgs. 14:18; 16:12), and loyalty to the one true God.

Bands of secondary prophets

In addition to 'established' prophets who had recognized positions of *leadership, there were several bands of secondary prophets, such as those who met Saul after Samuel anointed him as king (1 Sam. 10:5), as well as the 100 prophets who were hidden by Obadiah (1 Kgs. 18:4), and the bands of prophets or 'sons of the prophets' in Bethel (2

Kgs. 2:3), Jeri (2 Kgs. 4:38).

These bands of false prophets of God, and were such as Elijah they must have message or rev essential requ 'prophet'. (For knowledge from Elijah on a c However, none is preserved in may suggest th ordinarily cour authority to t established pr Elijah. The dist bands of proph ing of prophec menservants an 18) in the new c

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