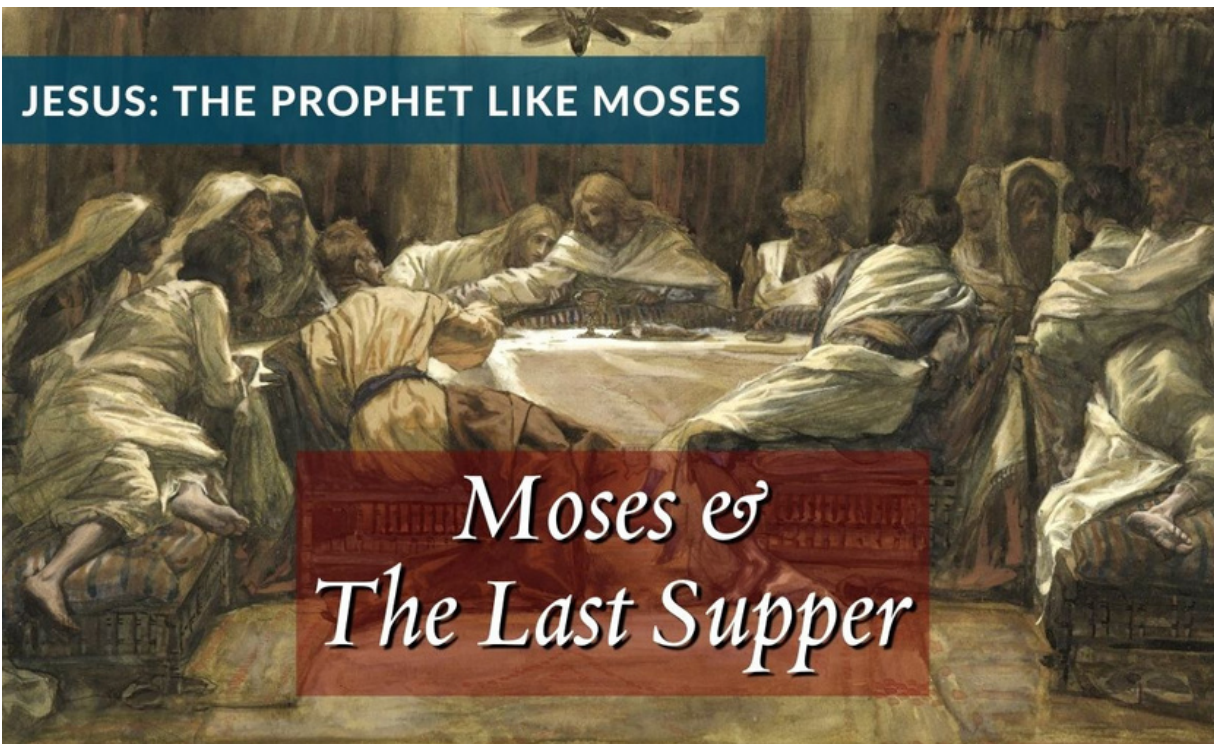


JESUS: THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES



Only one character in the Tanakh can truly be said to be the One prophesied to succeed Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19: The Servant of the Lord depicted in Isaiah 40-55. Fourth in a year-long series.

BY DR. JIM SIBLEY

The Last Supper is recounted in all four Gospels (Matt 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-23; and John 13) and is presented as a Passover seder, the ceremonial meal that recounts the events of the Exodus. In fact, although Passover had been celebrated for centuries, the Last Supper was one of only two unique Passover meals. The first was in Egypt, where the blood of lambs was smeared on the doorposts and lintels of Israelite homes. Never again would this be repeated. The Last Supper was the Passover to which the original had pointed. Jesus, the Prophet-like-Moses, was to offer his blood to provide ultimate redemption and deliverance. Never again would this be necessary. When the sacrificial system was established in the wilderness, it provided temporary atonement for sin through the sacrifice of a bull or a female goat (Lev 4-7:10, 17:11), but that original Passover foreshadowed the shedding of blood that would provide ultimate atonement.

How does this relate to the promise that God would raise up a prophet like Moses? Although many of the prophets of Israel exhibited characteristics that were reminiscent of Moses, only one character in the Old Testament can truly be said to be the One prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15-19: The Servant of the Lord. He is the central figure in Isaiah 40-55.



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Using words and imagery reminiscent of the Exodus, the overall message of this section is that God would need to raise up the promised Prophet-like-Moses to lead a new Exodus out of sin and iniquity. This New Moses is the Servant of the Lord. The climax is reached in Isaiah 52:13–53:12. Isaiah 53:6 indicates that although we have all gone astray like sheep, “the Lord has laid on him [i.e., the Servant] the iniquity of us all” (53:6). He would be “like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers” (v. 7). The Passover lamb was intended to point forward to the Servant of the Lord, the Prophet-like-Moses.

Moses commanded the slaying of a lamb; Jesus offered himself as the Lamb. At the beginning of his earthly ministry, he had been introduced as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). He ended His mortal life as the Passover Lamb, providing ultimate atonement for sin. With his atoning death, he fulfilled the Passover, and with his resurrection, he fulfilled the Feast of First Fruits.

At the Last Supper, Jesus took the bread and the wine as symbols of his broken body and shed blood, but what is often missed is the significance of “this.” Jesus said, “This is my body, which is for you” (1 Cor 11:24). The only bread that would have been present at the Last Supper was unleavened bread. Jesus was saying, “This, this unleavened bread, this is my body.” It represented the purity of his life, without which his death would have been meaningless and ineffective. His sinless life qualified his sacrifice and fulfilled the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The destroyer must pass over! The Prophet-like-Moses has led us out of bondage and out of slavery!

Jim Sibley is on the CMJ USA board and has been involved in Jewish ministry for many years. He is the North America Coordinator for the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism and Research Professor for Israel College of the Bible. He and his wife, Kathy, have two married daughters and six grandchildren.



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