

Was Muhammad Prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:18-19?

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The Qur'an says that Allah is merciful towards those people, "Who follow the messenger, the gentile Prophet, described in the Torah and the Gospel" (Surah 7:156-157). Here we read that Muhammad was foretold or prophesied in both the Torah (Old Testament Scriptures) and the Gospel (New Testament Scriptures). It prompts some Muslims to read the Bible, in search for these Muhammad prophesies.

Some Muslim apologists contend that the Prophet which Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:18-19 was, in fact, Muhammad. Their contention is made because:

- 1) The Prophet would be like Moses and come from among the Israelite's brethren.
- 2) So they say, Muhammad was a prophet, "like" Moses (Deut. 18:18).
- 3) And they say, Muhammad was an Ishmaelite, thus "among their brethren" – a distant relative of the Israelites (Deut. 18:18).

Yet when one learns what is necessary to be "like" Moses and "among their brethren," the foretold Prophet could NOT be Muhammad.

- 1) Deuteronomy 34:10-12 teaches that Moses was unique.
 - a) The Lord knew Moses face to face (v.10). This is contrasted with the method by which God would typically reveal His will to prophets – visions and dreams (Num. 12:6-8). God spoke plainly to Moses. The Qur'an repeats this fact about Moses' prophet-hood and makes a distinction. It lists Moses separately from all other prophets, including Muhammad (Surah 4:163-164). This is because, "to Moses God spoke directly" (Surah 4:164). Thus the Qur'an says that Muhammad was not "like" Moses.
 - b) Moses worked miracles publicly (v.11-12). The demonstration of divine power was undeniable before Pharaoh, his servants, the land of Egypt, and in the sight of all Israel.
 - c) Thus, to be a prophet "like" Moses, Allah would have to speak to Muhammad face to face and Muhammad would have to work miracles publicly, demonstrating supernatural power before friend and foe alike. We've already seen that the Qur'an lists Muhammad distinctly from Moses in the way that God spoke to Moses (Surah 4:163-164). Furthermore, The Qur'an states that Muhammad did not perform miracles or signs. His "miracle" was the Qur'an (Surah 29:48-50). Well, with Moses, miracles were distinct from the message and confirmed the message. Muhammad was not "like" Moses this respect either.
- 2) Deuteronomy 17:14-15 clearly demonstrates the significance of the expression, "from among your brethren."
 - a) In this text, Moses foretells the time when Israel would clamor for a king to be like the nations around them. When that time came, they must appoint a king "from among your brethren." This is the same expression used in the Prophet prophesy (Deut. 18:18).
 - b) It is clear that the king could not be a foreigner – could not be anyone who is not your "brother."

- c) Brother or tribesman is what is clearly meant – not a person from another nation.
- d) The Qur'an uses the same language concerning a brother or tribesman in Surah 7:65, 73. Clearly Hud was a brother or tribesman to the people of 'Ad and Saleh was a brother or tribesman to Thamud. Another nationality would be excluded.
- e) Thus, the promised Prophet will be a brother and tribesman of Israel. Ishmaelites would not qualify.

Islam's Muhammad does not fit the criteria to be the Prophet that Moses promised. He was not an Israelite tribesman, he did not perform public miracles, and God did not speak to him face to face.

However, Jesus Christ does fit the criteria to be the Prophet that Moses promised. He was an Israelite tribesman, descending from the tribe of Judah. He performed a multitude of public miracles – both friends and foes witnessed and admitted the works. Furthermore, Jesus was God's final mouthpiece to the world (John 1:18, Heb. 1:1-2). Jesus knew God and made Him known.

Finally, the New Testament explicitly applies Moses' words to Jesus Christ and teaches that He is the Prophet.

“For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." (Acts 3:21-26, NKJV).