



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Exodus 7:1-2

"Work of the Redeemer as Prophet"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for Thy word and we pray that Thou will give us understanding again as we turn to it. We thank Thee for the encouragement that we receive from the Scriptures and the encouragement from the Scriptures that it is through the Scriptures that we have hope and salvation, as it is bound up in the revelation concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. We praise Thee that they point us unerringly to him who is the object of our worship, and praise, and thanksgiving because he is the subject of our salvation.

And we thank Thee and praise Thee for the opportunity to gather in his name and to open the Scriptures to hear what they have to say concerning him. Guide and direct us this evening as we think about the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we ask Thy blessing upon each one present. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now the subject for tonight in the continuation of our series of studies in "Basic Bible Doctrine" is "The Work of the Redeemer as Prophet." You may remember that in our last study, we began a brief consideration of what is called theologically, "Christology." Of course, we're not trying to be as technical as we would be if we were

teaching systematic theology. We are seeking to; however, cover in general that particular subject so tonight, "The Work of the Redeemer as Prophet."

And let me just say a few words by way of an introduction to the topic. It is common among theologians to say that Jesus Christ performed his mediatorial work by functioning in three offices. And these three offices are the office of prophet, the office of priest, and the office of king. John Calvin was the first to recognize the important distinction of the offices of Christ, but most of the other major theologians, including the Lutherans, have followed him in this. And so, if you will open up Calvinistic or Lutheran or Baptist theologies, generally, you will see that the work of Jesus Christ is subsumed under the three heads of the work as prophet, the work as priest, and the work as king.

As prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ represents God with men. That is, he gives us an infallible word from the Lord God for us who are men. As priest, he represents men before God in that he carries out the atoning work as our representative and, thus, he represents us with God. As king he rules over men for God. All of these Messianic figures: prophet, priest and king, in the Old Testament were anointed with oil. So in that sense, they could all be called Messiahs. The priest was a Messiah. The king was a Messiah. The prophet was a Messiah. We tend to associate the Messianic work of our Lord Jesus Christ with his office as king and we talk about the Messiah coming again, but our Lord as Messiah was prophet, as Messiah he was priest, and as Messiah, he will be king.

This is a very important subject, "The Work of Jesus Christ as a Prophet" and it also touches contemporary life. It's important just because it's one of the major aspects of the work of Jesus Christ, but it's very relevant because it touches contemporary life in the church. In fact, I think it would be fair to say that if the charismatics understood what the Bible teaches about prophecy and about the prophet, then there would be no problem with one large aspect of the Charismatic movement and that is their claims to be prophets or to have prophets.

I think also that if we understood fully what the Bible teaches concerning Jesus Christ as prophet and if we understood fully about what the Bible teaches about the office of prophet, then the chances are, while we may have the Mormons to contend with, many of the Christians who contend with them, would be much better able to contend with them if they understood what the Bible teaches concerning prophecy.

Usually, most of us at one time or another have some conversations with Mormon men who knock on our doors and seek to tell us something about the Mormon faith. I've had many of these discussions through the years. I love to see them come down the street because it's always very interesting. I usually come to the door all prepared, walk out, shut the door. I don't know whether it's necessary to do that, but the Bible does say, "Don't entertain any false teachers in your house lest some people may get some wrong ideas." And I don't want people in my neighborhood to think, "Well, he's friendly with the Mormons" and he must, therefore, believe some of their doctrine. So we usually walk out in the yard and have a good theological discussion there. And one of my most recent ones, we discussed the nature of prophecy and biblical prophecy and it was very clear they didn't understand exactly what a prophet was; although, they made great claims for Joseph Smith and his prophecy.

Just today, in today's paper there is an article in *The Dallas Morning News* that has to do with the subject of the Mormons and prophecy. And there is a woman by the name of Sonia Johnson who has been excommunicated by the Mormons for fighting for ERA. In the course of this rather lengthy interview, which was in this morning's paper, the author, who is obviously speaking from this interview and the things that she learned from it, she writes, "The church prophets are supposed to speak for God and Sonia never questioned the voice until it espoused opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment."

There are also some other things here. In 1890, when Utah was pushing for statehood, the church announced discontinuation of polygamy. I'm sure that the prophets got a word, but they got a word because of the political situation. In 1978, priesthood

was extended to all worthy males. As you may know, the Mormons for many years did not allow any black people to be priests, but because of the furor over civil rights and equal rights, the prophetic ministry of the church got a word from the Lord and that was that "all worthy males should be made eligible for the first time." And there are some other things in here of some interest, but it illustrates, I think, the fact that if we understood what the Bible teaches about prophecy, we would not be so likely to fall into the trap of Mormonism.

We turn now to the prophetic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and, first of all, we want to take up that aspect of the subject which I've entitled, "The Scriptural Idea of a Prophet." And I'd like for you to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 18 and I want to read now verses 9 through 22. And as we read through this, I'll just make a very few comments concerning the general theme of these verses which Moses has written; Deuteronomy chapter 18 and verse 9.

Now you'll find that as we go through, Moses warns against heathen augury, soothsaying, witchcraft and then he promises that God is going to give prophets. He warns against the rejection of the prophets and he warns also against presumption and he concludes with a test of biblical prophecy. Listen to what Moses says, "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found upon you any one who maketh his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or who useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter of mediums, or a wizard, or a necromancer. (Now this is an interesting series of Hebrew words, which are designed to cover in general the kinds of things that are done by those who are interested in the occult. Almost everything is included here even such things as the consulting of mediums, speaking with the dead, hypnotism, and things like that, are all covered by these words which Moses has used. Now he says in verse 12,) For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these

abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect (now that word means generally mature) with the LORD thy God. For these nations, whom thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not permitted thee so to do. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not'. (He refers to the experience in the giving of the Ten Commandments and how they pled with the Lord that they would not hear those things again because they were terrified at the revelation of the Lord as a God of judgment there). And the LORD said unto me, 'They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him'. (Now you might think that at this point the only thing that Moses has in mind is a prophecy concerning one prophet, but listen to the rest of the passage,) But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. (So it's clear that while he speaks of an outstanding prophet like Moses to whom they shall hearken, he also has in mind the possibility of prophets speaking false words. Now that will have a bearing on something I want to say later on so I wanted you to notice that. Now the final two verses,) And if thou say in thine heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?' When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”

This age is characterized by a great deal of interest in the future and it's also characterized by an abysmal failure to predict the future. We are so interested in the future that many of our large corporations, we have noticed from reading the newspapers, have even been interested in what they have called "futurology." There are men associated, or were associated, even just recently with some of our largest corporations who were futurologists. That is, they were people who gave themselves specially to study the signs that might enable them to make predictions concerning the economic future so that a futurologist came to be a term that businessmen that were acquainted with. I saw several articles, one I remember particularly in *The Wall Street Journal* on futurology and the place that futurology was playing in our large corporations. So we have a great deal of interest in the prophetic future, not simply in biblical churches, but in our businesses. They are interested in the future.

Now we also have, of course, in the Christian church and, particularly in the evangelical churches, a great deal of interest in prophecy. There's a great deal of interest in the future and there is even there an abysmal failure to predict it. It's very difficult for Bible teachers to keep from saying something that might be thought to be setting a date. Just today, I read a statement made by a well known Bible teacher who could hardly keep from saying something that indicated that he thought that the time was drawing near for the age to end. Later on, he spoke more generally, but it's just very difficult for a man who teaches the Bible not to say something that makes one think, if he's not setting a specific date, it's a general date. So there's a great deal of interest in the future, a great deal of failure to prophecy concerning the future, and it's something that we all, I think, need to be acquainted with from the standpoint of, "What does the Bible teach?"

The terms for prophet: there is a term for prophet used in the Old Testament, I just transliterated it very simply as "naw-bee" and in the New Testament the word is "prof-ay'-tace." These are the two words that are primarily used for prophet. Now there are several others in the Old Testament, but the Hebrew expression "naw-bee", which means

prophet is the most commonly used and the one which I've set off here, transliterated "prof-ay'-tace" is the New Testament noun for prophet. These terms mean essentially spokesman for God. That is "naw-bee" in the Old Testament was a spokesman for God. In the New Testament "prof-ay'-me" and "prof-ay'-tace" means to speak forth so that the term means essentially "a spokesman for God."

What a prophet does is receive revelation from the Lord God and give it to men. There is one classic passage on the term "prophet" and we ought to be acquainted with it so let's turn to it, it's Exodus chapter 7 and verse 1; Exodus chapter 7, verse 1 and 2. Now Exodus chapter 7 and verse 1 and verse 2, listen now and note very carefully what we read,

"And the LORD said unto Moses, 'See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh': and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he may send the children of Israel out of his land.

Now notice carefully the expressions "Moses, I have made you a god to Pharaoh." So in this little arrangement that they have in which Pharaoh is confronted by Moses and Aaron, Moses takes the place of God before Pharaoh, "I have made thee a god to Pharaoh." But now, there is also a prophet involved in this. There is God, there is a man and there is a prophet. Now the prophet is Aaron, "and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee." That is, the real true God will give to Moses, who's acting for God to Pharaoh the message. But, once Moses who acts as a god for Pharaoh has the message, then Aaron is to speak that message as prophet to Pharaoh. He says, "And Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land." So Moses acts as God. Pharaoh, of course, is the man, and Aaron is the one who acts as prophet. So what does the prophet do? Well, the prophet takes the words of God and brings them to men. It's the works of the prophet to act as a mediator giving revelation from God to men.

Now that is very important. Now it's not Bible teaching in general, but it is revelation. In other words, it's something that has not been revealed. A prophet takes something that has not been revealed and conveys it to man. You can say new revelation, if you like; revelation, that is his task. So the prophet then is an individual who takes revelation and gives it to men.

Now if I should ask you the question sitting in the audience, "Are there prophets today?" What would you say? Why do you know that the charismatics claim that they have prophets in their meetings? If they claim that they have prophets in their meetings that means that they claim they are getting direct revelation from God; revelation not found in the Bible. So it is revelation outside of Scripture. That's the claim of prophet.

Now not only is that true of the charismatics that is true also of certain evangelical churches. In fact, you often hear people say, "What we need today is some prophets." And one of the reasons they say that is what they are really looking for is someone who preaches the word with authority. They think of the prophets as being individuals who preach the word with authority. And what we generally find in the pulpits these days are people who don't teach the word or teach it very, very poorly. They do not give us any sense of the Lord speaking through them. So they say, "What we need are some prophets."

But we are never really doing right calling things by wrong biblical names. Why not just say? "We need some men who have had some firsthand acquaintance with the Lord who speak out of a sense of urgency given by the Holy Spirit, men who have a real experience of the doctrines of the word of God, men who preach with power." Prophets bring revelation from God. Now the revelation is closed. The Canon is closed. This is a book of divine revelation. So far as I can tell, we do not have any merit whatsoever for claiming additional revelation.

Oh, it's true there are passages in the Bible that speak about the future days in which there shall be some revelation given, but in the present day, that's an entirely

different matter and we do not have any prophets today. Now that is a rather important thing. That means that Joseph Smith is not what it is claimed that he was. It means that the charismatics do not have any prophets in their meetings. It also means that the principle of a temporary spiritual gift is a biblical principle. There are those that say, "Well, if it happened in the 1st Century, it ought to be happening now." How foolish. Christ was crucified in the 1st Century. Shall we expect that to happen again? Christ was resurrected in the 1st Century? Shall we expect that again? No, there are things that happen once and for all and the giving of the miraculous gifts happened once for all so far as this age is concerned. The Scriptures teach that very plainly. So the prophet then is a person who gave revelation. He was a mouthpiece of God. His utterances are divine revelation.

Now we can distinguish a twofold stress in this divine revelation and I have set it forth here as, "Prophecy is Predictive Revelation and Prophecy is Moral Revelation." In other words, when we normally think of prophecy what do you usually think of? Well, we usually think of prophecies concerning the Second Advent, or prophecies concerning the great tribulation, or prophecies concerning the new heavens and the new earth, or prophecies concerning the anti-Christ. This is predictive revelation. The prophets gave a good deal of that, the apostles gave a good deal of this; the Lord Jesus Christ gave a good deal of this.

We also had prophets in New Testament days before the Canon was closed who gave revelation of the future and their ministry is recorded in the Book of Acts. There was a man by the name of Agabus who in the Book of Acts is referred to twice as giving prophecies. Silas is spoken of as being a prophet too. But Agabus in Acts chapter 11 gives a prophecy. Acts 11, in verse 27, in verse 28, we read, "And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch and there stood up one of them named Agabus and signified by the Spirit that there should be great famine throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." So he stood up in the midst of the

open meeting like we have on Sunday night, you couldn't do that in most churches today because no one can stand up. If you stood up in the midst of the ordinary church meeting and started speak, they'd send the deacons after you and say, "Shut up." And if you kept speaking they would drag you out. But in the early church, they had the freedom, if they were gifted men, to stand on their feet. We don't believe that everybody can speak or teach in the meeting of the church. Gifted men may teach. All men may exercise their priesthood, but only gifted men may teach in the meeting. Well these were gifted men. They had the gift of prophecy. Agabus stood up; he made a prophecy about a famine. And, you'll notice, Luke says, "It came to pass" too. Now that was predictive revelation. It was local in the sense that it was related to that particular situation, but he acted as prophet.

Now prophecy is also moral revelation. Now when we say it is moral revelation, it can then be called, as Paul calls prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14, it can be called exhortation, comfort, encouragement, so that prophecy may be encouraging, comforting, but at the same time its revelation. That's the key point. It's not teaching. Teaching is taking what has already been revealed and explaining it. Prophecy when it is moral revelation, is giving new information from the Lord God. Now when you stand up in the meeting and you open up the Bible and exhort the flock based on Scripture, you're not prophesying, you're teaching or you're exhorting. There is a gift of exhortation. So the prophet then gave predictive revelation and he also gave moral revelation. The prophets of the Old Testament like Isaiah, they spoke of the future, but they also spoke of the problems of their own particular day. But all of it was revelation given by God and Isaiah was the medium by which that revelation came to men. So the prophets then it has been said by popular Bible teachers, the prophets were foretellers and they were forth tellers. That is, they prophesied concerning the future and they also simply gave forth a message from the Lord God which might have to do with the present time. The prophet's aim was to support the faith of the believers and to inspire them to worshipful obedience. And so,

they gave them great glowing prophecies of the future but they made application to the present.

I wish it were possible for us to take a look at Isaiah chapter 2 and chapter 3 and chapter 4 because chapter 2 begins with a great look into the future in which Isaiah exercises magnificent foresight and talks about the last days. But then against the background of the last days and the principles that will be operative then, he takes a look at the society of his own time and points out that it is characterized by principles that are contrary to the principles of the Lord God manifested in this golden age that is to come. And so in the 3rd chapter of the Book of Isaiah, there is a very penetrating criticism, critique, of the society in which he was living. And then finally it concludes in the 4th chapter with another magnificent look into the future. So it's characterized by foresight and insight and then foresight, but it's all prophecy, predictive and also moral, but all revelation, all new. So in the New Testament, we often have the fulfillments of what the prophets wrote in the Old Testament.

Incidentally, in the New Testament, we may have some elaboration of the prophecies of the Old Testament, but never anything that contradicts them. And also those Old Testament prophecies must be fulfilled exactly. There may be other things added in the time of the fulfillment. I spoke on this subject some time ago and I made reference to one of the columns in Peanuts in which Linus is sitting before TV looking, as is his custom, he's sitting about two feet from it, looking at it very intently and Lucy comes in and says, "I have a message for you." She says, "Mom says, 'Get your stupid self in there and clean up your stupid room!'" And with that he gets up and starts walking away and she takes a seat in front of the TV. But as he goes out he says, "I'm sure she didn't say it quite like that" and Lucy says, as she's looking at the TV now herself in his spot, "So I elaborated a little." [Laughter] Well, in the New Testament we do have elaboration of the Old Testament prophecies, but nevertheless they are fulfilled in literal fashion.

Now I want to say a word or two about the scriptural proof for Christ's prophetic ministry. And now we turn a little more seriously to Deuteronomy chapter 18. This is the normative Old Testament passage on the prophecy of the coming prophet. Incidentally, one might ask the question, "Why did God give prophets to start with? The priests were supposed to be custodians of the law, teachers of the law, custodians of the cultists too." Well, the prophets came because the priests proved to be insufficient after the death of Moses. Moses was the greatest of all the prophets. In the last of the book, Deuteronomy 34, we'll look at that passage in a moment, it's stated that there was not a prophet like Moses nor had there come one like him afterwards among men. So the prophets were promised by God.

Now in the passage, which I read to you, Moses warns against the heathen practices of soothsaying and witchcraft and the other things that went with that. He also warns them against presumption and he concludes with a test of genuine prophecy. That, incidentally, is a test that is not often practiced either in the present time. Prophets now, that is these prophets that appear in charismatic churches and others in other churches that recognize the spiritual gift of prophecy as valid today, just collect some of their prophecies. They're all very, very general so that they can be fulfilled. They're never specific. If anybody is a prophet, he ought to be able to prophesy specifically. He ought to be able to say, "Saturday night the Cowboys will beat the Steelers. Not only beat them, but will beat them 32 to 26." And it should come out to 32 to 26. He shouldn't just prophecy that, "There's gonna be a football game on Saturday night and somebody's gonna be happy at the conclusion of it." [Laughter] That's the kind of prophecies that the prophets of today give.

One of them I heard, I've mentioned this before, one of them I heard in a church in Oklahoma City, the prophet prophesied, "Next week the Lord's gonna give us a great blessing when we meet on Sunday." Well, that could mean anything, if the building burned down, that could be a great blessing [Laughter]. That's a test of their faith, you

know, anything can be a great blessing. The prophets prophesied specifically. Agabus said, "There's going to be a famine" and it came to pass. So Moses warns against heathen augury, soothsaying, witchcraft, all of the other things taking birds and looking at them and having them speak and the various other types of things that are carried on in order to gain some insight into the future.

He concludes with that test of prophecy, but what about the prophet that he speaks about here now? He says in verse 15,

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. (And then in verse 18,) I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him."

Now the Authorized Version, if you have an Authorized Version, you'll notice that word "prophet" is capitalized, but of course, now that's an interpretation. In the Hebrew text, there is no capital letter. It's perfectly all right to capitalize it if you think that's a reference to Christ, but you have to prove it's a reference to Christ. You can't say it's capitalized. You can't come to it and say, "Well, I'll put a capital there and that'll prove it's a reference to Jesus Christ." You can't do that. So this is an interpretation. Now we, therefore, must ask ourselves, "Does the passage support a reference to Jesus Christ?" because we do read in the verses that follow down here, "And if thou say in thine heart, 'How shall we know, (well of verse 20) "But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.'" So evidently here, we have some prophets speaking falsely and in this prophecy they are referred to. So it's natural then that there should be different interpretations about what is meant by this revelation of the prophet to come.

Some men like Yacob and Hoffmann, the well-known German interpreter, have said what is prophesied here is not one prophet, but an uninterrupted succession of prophets. In other words, all God is doing is prophesying that there will be prophets, the office of prophet. There will be a number of prophets who will be given to Israel. That, of course, is very difficult to believe in the light of the reference to the singular as we shall point out in a moment. Other interpreters and primarily in the early church, but others in later times such as Kurtz and Tholuck, who was incidentally professor at Halle where George Müller studied and under whom George Müller studied. He was an evangelical and Charles Hodge when he was at Princeton Theological Seminary went over to study under Professor Tholuck. Well, Professor Tholuck, Kurtz and others including the early church have taken this as a direct exclusive reference to Jesus Christ.

Generally, contemporary interpreters, and I think in this case, they are right, have combined these two interpretations and have said that what we really have here is a prophecy of a successive line of prophets, but of a successive line of prophets that culminates in this one great prophet. And that the prophecy here of prophets to come is along the line of the prophecy of the seed in Genesis chapter 3. There a seed is promised to come and the seed is the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent and there is enmity between the seed as the historical unfolding of the members of the family proceeds. So that those represented in the line of the faithful are contending with those that are under the dominion of Satan so that there is conflict all through the Bible between those that belong to the Lord God and those that belong to the serpent. But, finally, the seed culminates in one great seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. So that when the Scriptures say, "In thee Abraham shall all the families of the earth be blessed and then in thy seed" that seed, Paul says, "is Christ." In other words, there was a line of men and women in the seed or a line of men; I guess we should say which culminates in the seed, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I think that that is probably what we have here. In other words, they are promised a line of prophets, but in the line of prophets, there will ultimately be one person who will be the great prophet. Now the reason this is likely the interpretation is because the use of this term "prophet" in the singular, "naw-bee" that word that I put in the margin over there, the use of that word in the singular is never referred to more than one individual. In other words, when we read prophet in the singular, it is always a reference to one individual.

There are other reasons. The words "like me" and "like you" suggest that the other Old Testament prophets, who were generally inferior to Moses, are not referred to. If you turn over to Deuteronomy 34:10, I think it would be good for you to turn there, notice what the writer here says concerning Moses. Chapter 34, verse 10 of Deuteronomy, we read, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face." In other words, so far as Moses was concerned, he was the greatest of the human prophets so that all that line was inferior to him. Those words then "like me" and "like you" indicate some unusual kind of prophet. Not the ordinary kind because the ordinary kind were not like Moses. So when he says here in verse 15, "The LORD Thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me", Moses is speaking. There was no other prophet like him other than our Lord Jesus Christ and even he surpassed Moses. And there are other reasons as well. The New Testament in its interpretation confirms this, as we shall see in just a moment, because in the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ is said to fulfill this very prophecy of Deuteronomy chapter 18.

Now I think it would be good for us to read a passage or two in order to see that. Let's turn first to John chapter 7 and verse 40; John chapter 7 and verse 40. Now the Lord Jesus, while you're finding the Book of John, it's in the New Testament, in our Lord's ministry, you remember he stood up in the great day of the feast and he said,

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, whom they that believe in him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.) (Now notice the 40th verse,) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, 'Of a truth this is the Prophet'."

Now what do they refer to? Why, they refer to Deuteronomy chapter 18 and the great prophecy of the prophet, "this is the prophet" that we have been expecting. Turn over now to Acts chapter 3 and Peter speaks, and he refers very specifically to Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 22; Acts chapter 3. Peter is preaching and he says, verse 22,

"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which who not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, 'And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'"

Now if you'll just put 26 with 22, you will see that Peter says that Jesus is that prophet, "For Moses truly said unto the father, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you'." Now notice verse 26, "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities." It's clear that Peter says that the fulfillment of Deuteronomy chapter 18 is in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now if that's so then we can say that the Lord Jesus was a prophet like Moses. In what way was he like Moses? Turn it around and in what ways was Moses like our Lord Jesus Christ? Well, let me suggest to you ways that Christ was like Moses. He was the founder of a new age. Moses was the head of an old age. Christ is the founder of a new age. The law came by Moses. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ", the Apostle John says.

In the freedom of communion that they enjoyed with God, they were alike. Moses was the man who talked with the Lord God face to face. Our Lord Jesus is of that character in his communion with God. In their mediation, Christ was like Moses. Moses was the mediator of the law of God. God gave the law through angels, through the mediator, Moses, who in turn gave it to the children of Israel. The Lord Jesus Christ has come with the revelation of God and has communicated it to us.

They were also alike in the signs and wonders that they performed. Moses performed his great signs in Egypt in order that the children of Israel might be led out in the exodus. When the Lord Jesus Christ came, he performed the Messianic signs because he was in the process of leading people out of spiritual darkness, spiritual guilt, spiritual condemnation. So they both performed signs and wonders.

Incidentally, Moses after he performed those signs and wonders rarely performed any signs thereafter. They were for a particular ministry to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles performed mighty miracles which were a necessary thing at that particular stage in the unfolding of the divine revelation. But we've long since passed that and that's why we don't expect to have miracles today.

If God wanted to have miracles, he would have miracles. If he wanted people to perform miracles, they would be performing miracles. If he wanted his servants to perform them, if he wanted some of his preachers to perform them, I might be performing them. He could even use me to perform a miracle, but he obviously has not wanted to do that. He's not been doing it. He is sovereign; he can do what he wills.

In the severity of their penalties attached to disobedience to the revelation they were alike. For when men disobeyed the words of Moses, they suffered. "They shall suffer even more so", the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews says, "If they obey not the words of our Lord Jesus Christ." They were both prophets. Moses was the prophet; our Lord was the prophet. And I think climatically they were both suffering servants; for Moses suffered renunciation. He identified himself finally with the people of God. He carried out through suffering his ministry and came to ultimately the reward that God had set forth for him. And in this sense, like other deliverers of the children of Israel, he was a suffering servant. But the primary Suffering Servant is the Lord Jesus Christ who renounced the glory of heaven, came here, suffered humiliation by virtue of identification with the people of God, and then led them out in the greatest of all exoduses from the bondage of sin into the light of salvation through the blood that was shed at the cross of Calvary.

Now so far as the fulfillment of this is concerned, this prophecy reaches its fulfillment in this, that the Lord Jesus applied the term to himself. In Matthew chapter 13 and verse 57, this is what we read and I'll just turn to this passage because it does indicate that Jesus Christ considered himself to be a prophet. We read, "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, 'A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country, and in his own house'." The Lord Jesus applied the term to himself.

Others thought of him as being a prophet. He asked remember at Caesarea Phillip, the disciples, 'Who do men say that I the Son of man am?' They said, 'Some say that Thou art John the Baptist (who was a prophet): some, Elijah (a prophet); others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets'. So others also realized that our Lord Jesus was a prophet. And most of all, our Lord demonstrated that he was a true prophet by the fact that his prophecies came to pass.

Now let me give you one. One is all you need. He prophesied, he said to Peter, he said, "Now, Peter, before the cock crows, you're going to deny me thrice." Now that's

a pretty good prophecy. That was very good. A person who can control the crowing of cocks can control almost anything. And so, what do we read? Well, we read that Peter denied the Lord three times and we read that the cock crowed. And Peter recognized the fulfillment of it and went out and wept bitterly. Incidentally, while this prophecy was being fulfilled, those Roman soldiers were smiting our Lord on the face and they were saying, "Prophecy unto us, prophecy unto us" and off in the distance, they heard the sound of a cock crowing. That shows you how blind you can be with spiritual things, right in the midst of things that are really happening.

Do you know you can sit in the seats of Believers Chapel and hear the preaching of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ preached in relative purity, (I think real purity [Laughter], in relative purity, you can hear it in relative purity and you can get nothing out of it. You can be as dumb as those Romans saying, "Prophecy unto us" while one of the greatest prophecies in all of the word of God is being fulfilled and they actually hear it. But his prophecies came to pass. He said, "I'm going to Jerusalem. They're going to take me. They're going to slay me, they're going to bury me, but on the third day I'm going to rise again from the dead." And that is what he did. So the Lord Jesus demonstrates that he's a true prophet. He doesn't say, "I'm going to Jerusalem and some good things and some bad things may happen" [Laughter], but he is very specific. He doesn't even say, "I'm going to die and be buried and then I'm going to be raised from the dead." He says, "On the third day." So he prophesies specifically and those prophecies are fulfilled.

Now let me just say a few words about the execution of the prophetic office by Christ. There are two senses in which our Lord exercises his prophetic ministry. He exercises it immediately in the sense that he prophesies directly himself, in his own person, with people listening to him, but he also prophesies through some agents immediately. That is, through others such as through the apostles in the present era, through the Holy Spirit. But, I'm just going to sum it up by treating it in his pre-incarnate state, in his incarnate state, and in his post-resurrection state. And, of course, we only

have about six or seven minutes. You didn't realize this was the time for the hour message, but it is. We don't have time to deal with all the details. I just simply want to point out to you that in our Lord's pre-incarnate state, he nevertheless acted as prophet. As the angel of Jehovah, he spoke the word of God in revelation, not teaching revelation.

He appeared to Abraham, for example, in Genesis chapter 18, he said, "Abraham, Sarah is going to have a child next year about this or about the time that a woman would normally have a child." Sarah over there in the tent laughs, remember, she laughs over that. And this individual, who is called a man in the opening part of Genesis 18, is suddenly referred to as the Lord. It was our Lord appearing as the angel of Jehovah in his pre-incarnate state giving out new information, new revelation.

He also wrestled with Jacob and he said some things to Jacob in the midst of the wrestling. It was a man who wrestled with him, but then when Jacob got through the wrestling, he called that place Peniel because he had seen the face of God there. It was the angel of Jehovah. So all through the Old Testament as the angel of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ acted as the prophet giving new revelation or giving revelation.

Now in his incarnate state, when he was here in the flesh, the revelation was not only in himself, but in his words. There are three great discourses that epitomize the ministry of the Lord Jesus. You could name them. They are the Sermon on the Mount. In that, the way of life that the disciples should live during the interim is set forth by him with an application of spiritual principles to us, the Sermon on the Mount.

Then in the 13th chapter of the Great Discourse on the Parables, which has been called the "Sermon Out of the House", he sets forth the form of the kingdom from the king's rejection at his First Advent to his reception at his Second Advent. If you want to know the characteristic principles that shall be in operation in the present age, read Matthew chapter 13. That is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus in parabolic form.

And then the greatest of all the prophesies, perhaps, is the Sermon on the Mount, the longest answer that he ever gave to any question asked him. It is perhaps the greatest

prophetic discourse of the whole New Testament. It has to do with the Second Advent and related things. And you'll notice as you read that, by the way, that it not only is a doctrinal message, in which truths concerning the Second Advent are set forth in prophetic form, but it is applied morally, so that the moral response of individuals to the doctrine is also included. But it's all prophecy, for prophecy is predictive revelation and moral revelation, we've been saying.

Finishing these discourses, we would like to say probably like the officers who heard the Lord Jesus, "Never man spake like this man." You know, have you ever noticed in the Old Testament, we read, "Thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Lord" and suddenly there comes a man on the scene whose name is Jesus of Nazareth and he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, I say unto you"? And no one ever says, "Wait a minute! The right language is 'Thus saith the Lord'. You don't have a right to say that!" No one ever objects because there's something deep down within the human heart that says when God says in the Old Testament, "Thus saith the Lord" and when Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you" that those words come from divine persons and we sense that he has the perfect right to say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you" and we have the feeling that that is a word from the Lord. He's the prophet.

Now in his post-resurrection state, of course, he prophesies by the pope. Now that, of course, is what a large religious organization would like for us to believe. That sitting over in Rome in Italy, there is a man who is able to speak "ex cathedra", out of his throne and give us infallible revelation. How foolish. How ridiculous. In his post-resurrection ministry, he has spoken to us through the apostles who've given us the New Testament and he speaks through the Holy Spirit.

He spoke directly to the Apostle Paul on the Damascus Road. So in his post-resurrection ministry, he speaks in the Spirit, through the apostles, primarily. And what we have in the New Testament in the Epistles and the remainder of the New Testament is

the prophetic ministry of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit through his apostles, the inspired word of God. Well, the prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ are true. Failure to give heed to them is punishable by death. The apostle puts it this way in 1 Corinthians chapter 16, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"; let him be under the curse, the Lord cometh.

If you're here in this audience and you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the prophetic word has set forth the ministry concerning him; we have divine revelation concerning his person and his work. His work in the past, his work in the present, his work in the future, it is all set forth here. If we do not respond to it the Scriptures says, "We shall experience everlasting judgment." We shall have to stand before this one who has given us the prophecy and we shall have to suffer eternal spiritual death if we refuse the ministry.

May God speak to your heart, may you come in faith to this great prophet, hear his revelation concerning his ministry as priest by which he dies for our sins, and may you receive him as your own Savior. Next week, the Lord willing, we will look at his ministry as priest. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the prophet whom we have and we thank Thee that his ministry is reliable. He is truthful. Oh, God, give us the motivation and the...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]