

**Deuteronomy 18: 15-22;**

**John 1:19-21; 7:37-44**

December 13, 2020

### **Redeemer: Premier Prophet**

**Jesus Redeemer: long ago prepared for us. He came to defeat the works of the devil and redeem us from the darkness of sin. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Willingly and lovingly he took the burden of our sins with Him to the Cross, wiping them away for all time. This Redeemer, whom we prepare to receive in this season, was also God's greatest prophet; greater even than Moses who was sent to lead God's people to freedom.**

**Every now and then someone will ask me if I think we are in the "end times." When things start to get rough, or there are significant cultural changes some Christians go to the Bible and reread those passages that predict an end time. There have been numerous end-times prognosticators over the years. Prophecy sells in books, movies, and TV shows. The secular version is found in the grocery store tabloids, market predictions, horoscopes, and of course the political pollsters. How do we tell what is true or not?**

### **Prophet or Charlatan?**

**Christianity has had its share of charlatan prophets. Montanus, in the late 2nd century in Asia Minor, claimed that the Holy Spirit spoke directly to him and through him. His followers called their movement "The New Prophecy." They claimed their revelation came directly from the Holy Spirit and superseded the authority of Jesus or Paul or anyone else. There have been others very much like Montanus throughout history – even in our lifetimes.**

**Years ago, there was a fellow named Harold Camping of Alameda, California, who predicted the Second Coming of Christ in 1994. He had been a Christian broadcaster for decades, sharing good biblical knowledge to his listeners and so his words were taken quite seriously. Camping predicted that Christ would return in judgment between September 15 and 27, 1994. When that didn't happen, Camping said that God was testing the righteous to see if they would still be faithful to him. Several years later, March 2012, he confessed that his attempt to predict a date was "sinful", and that his critics had been right in emphasizing the words of Jesus, ... no one knows about that day or hour, Matthew 24:36. Camping's followers were disappointed, and unbelievers dismissed the entire Christian faith because of him. Was Mr. Camping a true prophet? Not so much; at least in the biblical sense. He's lucky he didn't live during the days of the Old Testament. They might well have stoned him to death for being wrong.**

### **Spokesman For God**

The word “prophet” literally means “one who speaks on behalf of another.” In the Bible it means “one authorized to speak on behalf of God.” When a prophet said, “This is the word of the Lord...” his words had to be accurate and true. **There were two tests for a prophet: truth and accuracy.** A true prophet will measure up on both counts all the time.<sup>1</sup> If he spoke only for himself, his mistakes could be forgiven. But when he claimed to speak for God, no error was tolerated. Sometimes their predictions were immediately fulfilled. But others, not in their lifetimes leaving them mocked or worse.

## **I. A Prophet Like Moses**

We have heard the names of notable prophets in the O. T. - Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi, to name a few. But no other prophet after Moses would approach his greatness (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). He was the first and greatest of all the O. T. prophets. **He spoke with God face to face** and God used him to work great miracles (Exodus 3-4, 19-20). Yet, Scripture tells (Deuteronomy 18) how God promised through him to raise up a greater prophet. Moses told the Israelites: ***The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him, Deut. 18:15.*** To underscore this promise God said: ***I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him, Deut. 18:18.***

“Okay, Pastor. But what does it have to do with this sermon series on the Redeemer?” Let’s see. **Deuteronomy 18** tells us that there will come **a prophet who will have four characteristics:**

- 1. He will be raised up by God - meaning that he has a direct call from God.**
- 2. He will be like Moses - he will see God face to face.**
- 3. He will be from among the people - that is an Israelite.**
- 4. He will speak with divine authority - as a result of the preceding factors.**

The Jews had always understood that this prophecy would one day be fulfilled in a literal way by the coming of “The Prophet,” who would either come just before the Messiah or would in fact be the Messiah. This explains the dialogue between the Jews and John the Baptist we just read in John 1:19-21. When they ask who he was, he said, “I am not the Christ.” “Who are you, then? Are you Elijah?” “No.” “Well, then, are you the Prophet?” “No.” Both the Jews and John the Baptist understood “the Prophet” as the One predicted by Moses (Deuteronomy 18).

When Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the 5,000 some in the crowd said, ***Surely, this is the Prophet who is to come into the world, John 6:14.*** Later, when he spoke to the crowd at the Feast of Tabernacles, people exclaimed, ***Surely, this man is the Prophet, John 7:40.***

In the Gospel of John, chapter 5, there's this dialogue between Christ and his antagonists. They are questioning his credentials to be the Messiah. At the end of the debate, he summarizes his position with this: ***If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me, John 5:46.*** Where did Moses write about Jesus? Deuteronomy 18 – a prophet greater than Moses.

## **II. Jesus Succeeds Moses**

On the evening of Easter Sunday, the resurrected Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, but they did not recognize him. When He asked what they were talking about, one of them replied that they were discussing Jesus of Nazareth ***... a prophet powerful in word and deed before God and all the people, Luke 24:19.*** They could have called him Master, Savior, Lord, Redeemer. Yet they called him a prophet. When Jesus revealed himself, he called them foolish for failing to believe all that the prophets had spoken. ***And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself, Luke 24:27.*** Very likely His exposition included Deuteronomy 18.

If you doubt about Jesus being the Prophet like Moses look at this: Acts 3 tells how Peter heals a crippled beggar and then tells the crowd that this miracle had been done by the power of Jesus – the same man who had been crucified just a few weeks earlier. Then Peter quotes Deuteronomy 18:15, ***For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you,' Acts 3:22.***

Here's a comparison of Jesus and Moses. Let's see if Jesus measures up.

<b>Moses</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
<b>Raised up by God</b>	<b><u>Sent</u> by God</b>
<b>Spoke to God face to face</b>	<b>Was in the bosom of God (John 1:18)</b>
<b>From the people</b>	<b><u>Son</u> of Mary, legal son of Joseph</b>
<b>Performed miracles</b>	<b>Performed miracles</b>
<b>Gave the law</b>	<b><u>Fulfilled</u> the Law with grace &amp; truth (John 1:17).</b>

Surely Jesus is the fulfillment of a promise made 1200 years before his birth. "That's all very interesting Pastor, but so what? What does that have to do with my life?" Let me suggest several important things.

### **A. Jesus Reveals the True Word of God**

We all need someone we can believe in. We trust in government to do right and good, but we have so little trust in those running it. Can we believe what the media reports to us? Can we believe social media? **Without a foundation in a true truth a stable life is nigh impossible.**

When Christ finished the Sermon on the Mount, many commented that he spoke **...as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law, Matthew 7:29.** Remember what Moses said of the prophet to come? **You must listen to him, Deut. 18:15.** [Warning from God: *If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him into account, Deut. 18:19.*] If Jesus is truly the Prophet of God, then you either follow Him or you ignore Him. Jesus didn't need footnotes, references, and quotes to back up what he said, because he knew who he was.

- 1. He claimed divine authority for his words - John 14:24.**
- 2. He said his words would bring eternal life - John 12:50.**
- 3. He declared that his words would not pass away - Matt. 24:35.**
- 4. He ordered his words carried around the world - Matt - 28:19-20.**
- 5. He said that the ultimate destiny of men and women depended on their response to his words - John 5:24.**

These are not the statements of your average religious leader. They are either the words of the true Prophet of God or the words of a lunatic. I believe He is true and order my life around Him. What say you?

## **B. Jesus Diagnoses the True Human Condition**

Jesus explained why people turn away from the truth even when it stares them in the face: **Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil, John 3:20.** **We turn away from the truth because it exposes the darkness inside.** Jesus plainly said that, *... what comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'* *From within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean,'* Mark 7:20-23.

Jesus understands the human heart. People cover their sin with a respectable goodness, religiosity, or political correctness, but it doesn't fool Christ for a second. He calls it what it really is. He knows and declares the truth, though it offend some. He has very much to say about our lives and the state of our nation. Here's just two lessons we can take from His words:

**First: Christians must know the truth that sets them free.** We must confess our own sin and receive Christ's forgiveness. The fragmentation in our society and culture is home grown, it's in the souls of people.

**Second: do not let politics define everything in life.** We should be a theological constituency for whom political engagement is a practical necessity to secure the freedoms to do what is really important: preach the Gospel and build up the Church. We must support political leaders who truly protect religious liberty, whether or not they repent of sin and profess faith in Christ. **When we define ourselves in terms of our theology, then our political**

**preferences need not define our identity.** I am not sure the serious Christian can have any permanent political allies or enemies, but only collaborators who help the extension of the gospel. The problems before the country are not fundamentally political.

Facing rapid social and technological change, we believers must remain steadfast in our biblical worldview and our commitments to human dignity, personal responsibility, the value of the individual, family stability, and religious liberty. We should want to work for a better social order because we know what happens when there is no moral leadership. We should surely be saying **...that there is another king, one called Jesus, Acts 17:7.** **Only churches of genuine believers, with the transcendent truth of Jesus and a cohesive community, can bring about revival and cultural renewal.** Government bureaucrats, media elites, and tech giants can't mend the nation.

### **C. Jesus Holds The Future**

Most of us realize that **Jesus made predictions regarding his Second Coming** – he described the immoral condition of the world in the Last Days, the attacks on Israel, the rise of false religion, and his own return to the earth. His words on this subject may be found in **Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 17 and John 14.** But he didn't give us a specific date. ***But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father, Matt. 24:36.*** Since these events are yet future to us, we cannot check them for accuracy.

However, Jesus made at least five specific predictions that were fulfilled in his lifetime or shortly thereafter. These we can check for accuracy.

1. He predicted that one of his inner circle would betray him: Judas, Matt. 26:21-25.
2. He predicted his crucifixion: Good Friday in Jerusalem, Matt. 16:21.
3. He predicted his resurrection: Easter Sunday in Jerusalem - Matt. 17:23.
4. He predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit: Pentecost - John 14:16.
5. He predicted the fall of Jerusalem: A.D. 70 by the Roman army - Luke 21:24.

He predicted it. It came true. This is just what we would expect of the True Prophet of God. So, can you stake your life on Jesus' words? All the armies that have ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed; all the parliaments and congresses that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected life upon this earth as powerfully as has this one great Prophet. Moses was called by God to redeem the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. **Jesus, the greatest prophet and God's own Son, redeemed all of humanity from the slavery to sin.**

We're just two weeks away from Christmas. **Have you prepared for His entry into your life?** God planned for a long time for Him to enter our world and God has been waiting a long time for you to let Him fully enter your life. Don't put it

**off any longer. Crown him King of your life and join the millions who willingly worship him as Redeemer and Lord. He's the One who said:**

***Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away,***  
**Matt. 24:35.**

**<sup>1</sup>With regard to the 100% accuracy test, anyone may check out the words of the biblical prophets and see whether their predictions came true or not. Josh McDowell's Evidence That Demands a Verdict offers one of the best collections of fulfilled prophecy.**

