

Rejoice in Christ the Prophet

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[0 : 00] Well, if you have your Bible this morning, I want you to turn to the book of Deuteronomy, the book of Deuteronomy chapter 18. Deuteronomy chapter 18, and we're going to look at verses 9 through 22.

And let me just lay this out in terms of this passage where it comes in. This is the first five books of the Bible written by Moses, right? Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy means the law a second time, right? You've got the duet, and you've got the onomy, which is the word for law. And what's happening here is that the nation of Israel, they've left Egypt, and because of their complaints, because of their unwillingness to follow God, one generation dies out in the wilderness, and now the new generation, everyone who was 20 years and younger have all grown up, and they're about to enter into the promised land.

And on the eve of going in, the book of Deuteronomy is basically five sermons by Moses as he presses upon them again all of the covenant and the law of God so they would know how they ought to live in the land.

It is one of the favorite books of Jesus to quote in many of the gospel accounts. And in this particular passage, he makes reference to things that happened, perhaps that even happened before some of those who were listening to him were even alive, or they were at least children when these things happened.

[1 : 33] And as he does so, he lays out for them, because he's not going into the promised land, he lays out for them kind of what is about to happen, what they need to be looking for, and it gives us a glimpse of God's plan.

So we're in Deuteronomy chapter 18, beginning in verse 9, and I'm going to read all the way through verse 22. When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable things, the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, they listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so.

[2 : 58] The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen. You shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb, on the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God.

Let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die. The Lord said to me, They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

It shall come about that whoever will not listen to my words, which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.

You may say in your heart, How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken.

The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You shall not be afraid of him. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you that you have given us such a glorious instruction and insight into your

mind and to who you are and how we ought to live.

[4 : 31] And we just pray that you would help us now as we look at your word, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. A catechism is a teaching tool for parents.

Now, I said catechism. I didn't say catacombs. Catacombs are different. That's where you bury dead people. A catechism was a tool that many, many denominations have used for centuries to help parents teach their children what the Bible has to say.

It's a series of questions and answers. There's a question and there's a standard answer, and the children are to memorize both the question and the answer, and that's to help them know what the Bible teaches.

Now, one of the more famous catechisms that's out there is the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and one of the reasons that it's a little bit more famous than others is because of the very first question.

The very first question is quite an astounding question, and the question is this. What is the chief end of man? What is the chief end of man?

[5 : 41] Now, the answer, most of us could probably say something that would get us really close to what the answer is verbatim. You would probably say something to the effect of to glorify God, and you would be right.

That's the first part of the answer, that the chief end of man is to glorify God. But it's the second half of this answer that I want to focus in on because it's very different, and it's something that most of us might look at and kind of go like, what?

Listen to what it says. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. To enjoy Him forever.

Now, I'm not sure that most of us have grown up with the concept and the idea that our relationship with God is one of joy and enjoyment of God, that we're to enjoy God.

But it is something that the Bible teaches all through the Scriptures. We're to enjoy God. And one of the things that has driven me in the putting together this series for this Christmas season is that the wise men in Matthew 2, verse 10, says that when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

[7 : 01] And my hope and my prayer throughout these next five weeks is that as we see Jesus for who He is, we will rejoice with great exceeding joy.

Because this is the whole point of our lives. This is why we exist. We exist so that we might enjoy God, so that we might delight in Him, so that we might love Him, so that we might honor Him, so that we might be thrilled with who He is.

I want you to think of it this way. There's one sense in which we talk about God and it's like everything is for us to shower our praise upon Him. But there's a sense in which as we do that, there returns back to us something of a delight and a joy as we look at Him.

So what I want to do is I want to lay out for you over the next few weeks who Christ is. And this morning we want to look at Christ as prophet. Maybe you've heard the old saying that Christ is prophet, priest, and king.

And so we're going to look at that for the next three weeks and then we'll look at a couple other things in the weeks to follow. But I want us to understand that enjoying God is much like we would enjoy our kids, our spouse, our grandkids.

[8 : 16] Grandkids, it takes spending time with them. It takes learning something about them and interacting with them. And that interaction then brings us a bit of joy.

I mean, you've seen it. You've given to a kid, a grandkid, some sort of gift or some sort of memento or some sort of knowledge or some sort of little moment of special time. And they lit up with all this joy and they're just like so happy that you gave that to them.

And when that happened, you kind of went, boom, you lit up with joy as well. That moment of enjoying them, it's because you spent time and it's because you learned who they were and it's because you gave to them something of yourself and they gave something back.

Without diving too deep into this, in terms of joy and what this is, we want to enjoy God. We want to enjoy Christ.

And I think that as the prophet, we want to see this by answering four questions so that we can then grow in our joy. So I have four questions for you this morning.

[9 : 22] The first question is, why was a prophet needed? Why was a prophet needed? And you could even say, why is a prophet even needed today? And there are two reasons for this.

The first one is because of the deficiency of human knowing. The deficiency of human knowing. In other words, the way we know things, how we come to know things is lacking.

It's sick. It's ruined. And I'm not saying what we know, but I'm saying how we know. And a lot of people don't spend a lot of time thinking about the difference between these two things.

We just think to ourselves, we just sort of, we know what we know and we find out information. We have this knowledge in our heads. But there is a thing to be looked at as to how we know things. And that's a part of what's going on here. You can see in Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 9 through 14, as God tells them or Moses tells them, don't be like the nations that you're going to go in and be around.

[10 : 28] Matter of fact, we're going to drive them out. And do you remember what these nations were doing? They were making their sons and daughters pass through the fire. They were using divination and practicing witchcraft, interpreting omens, casting spells.

They had mediums and spiritists calling up the dead. They were doing all of these things. And verse 14 tells us that the nations, the nations were listening to these people.

And this listening is not just like, I heard you say something, but it's listening and understanding. In other words, the nations were using all of these spiritist rituals in order to gain knowledge about how to live life.

What crops should I plant next year? Why did my crops fail this year? Why is it that we've had a torrential rain and everything is ruined? Why is it that my children have done this other thing? Questions about life that they couldn't answer, that they wanted to answer. The nations would go to these spiritualist practices in order to try to gain knowledge, in order to understand what they needed to know to live life.

[11 : 38] And God is telling them, don't do that. Don't try to learn about the world the way the world learns. I mean, you can see this perhaps.

I don't know if these will help you, but maybe if you think about somebody who's an atheist, an atheist is a person who, because they do not believe in the supernatural, they will do what we call observation, and they will observe the physical world around them, things that can be measured, things that can be tested, and they will say that knowledge comes from observation.

And that's true to an extent, but not everything. For instance, love. While we can observe the changes in body chemistry as someone is sensing or feeling some sort of love for another person, you can't really observe love.

I mean, yes, you could see someone doing something nice for someone, and you would say, well, look, they're showing love. It's like, yes, they're showing love, but you did not observe love. So there's a way of knowing that is beyond what the atheist can even do.

There are some intellectuals who want to develop rational arguments in their minds in order to explain the world around them. And they even want to discount, say, the supernatural, saying that, well, this can't be.

[13 : 09] And so this mind is trying to put together and make sense of the world around them while at the same time discounting the supernatural. And the problem is, is that they're creatures who are part of this created order.

It's just difficult. And probably the most prominent thing in our world, in our culture, is that we have so many people who will lean on and rest on from horoscopes to zodiac to their feelings about things.

How do you know this is true? How do you know what you should do? Well, this just feels right. This feels like the right thing. And if you're really, really Christianized, you might even say, well, I feel like the Lord led me to this.

Now, there's a way in which we can talk about that that would be correct, but there's a lot of people who will hide under the guise of God saying God told them to do something when there's no way God told them to do no such thing.

One example is the guy who came to me and said that he felt like God was telling him that it was okay for him to divorce his wife. And I said, there is no way that God told you that.

[14 : 28] It would not square with the scriptures. The world around us wants to try to know things a certain way. And in truth, sometimes as the world tries to know things around them, sometimes they

hit on things that seem to be fairly true.

And we find ourselves at odds here in this moment. So let me see if I can illustrate what it is I'm saying. Because what I'm trying to say is that God has a method of giving to us knowledge that we need.

He has a plan. And when we seek knowledge about life in a way that God has not given to us, we face not only the possibility of being wrong, but we face danger from God's anger.

Imagine you've learned to drive a car. You know how to drive a car well. You know how to get from point A to point B. Most of you probably drive better than I do, especially here in the hill country because I still don't get it.

But imagine that you decide that you're going to take off and you're going to drive and you're going to drive to Kerrville in the left lane. Now you might make it there without any problems because there might not be anybody around who's going to come down the left lane at you.

[15 : 40] But just because you get there doesn't mean that you drove the right way. There is a way that we need to know things and God has given that to us and our own human understanding is frail and weak and is captured by our sinful hearts.

Therefore, we need a prophet to come and tell us the truth. There's a second reason that's given in our text, verse 16 and 17, and it's the recounting of the story of the giving of the law at Sinai and it is this fear of death.

It's a fear of death. As a matter of fact, Moses quotes from the people as they said, as they looked at Sinai. Now you've got to remember at Sinai, they've been set free from Egypt, they've crossed the Red Sea, they've gathered around Sinai and God comes down to meet them and you've got thunder and lightning and fire and smoke and dark clouds and you've got all this rumbling going on, this scary sign and God speaks out of that to the people and they say, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire anymore lest I die.

They understood something of the majesty and the holiness of God and if they were to hear him again with their own ears, they would die.

They were afraid. All through scripture, we see so many times where if we were to see God, we would not keep living. He is pure, He is good, He is perfect, He is majestically righteous and holy and we are wicked and sinful and if we were to see God, it would be like placing a feather in the fire, we would burn up completely.

[17 : 29] So we need a prophet. That's the first question. Second question, what exactly does a prophet do? And a prophet does two things.

That's it. A prophet will foretell and forth tell.

You heard the difference in what I'm saying? Good, because I don't want to say it again. He foretells the future. He foretells the future. You can see that in verse 21 through 22 as it speaks about a prophet who says something, you know he's a prophet if what he says comes true.

It comes to pass. So he's telling the future. Now that is not the primary, okay, contrary to popular belief, that is not the primary thing that a prophet does.

The primary thing that a prophet does is that he foretells. To foretell is to speak the truth about God. He's just telling the things that God has told him to say.

[18 : 36] And if you read through the prophets, many of these times through Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, while there are things that look to the future, much of what they say is chastising the people because they have failed to live up to God's standards.

So it's a telling of the truth of God. So one is about the future, but one is about the here and now and who God is and what he expects of them. These are the two modes of the prophet.

So with those two questions answered, I want to come to this third question. And it's this. Was Jesus the prophet? Was Jesus the prophet?

Now, you know, spoiler, yes, he was, is, but we just want to kind of look and see how. We get this from both verse 15 and verse 18 of Deuteronomy 18.

This is the prophecy of the prophet. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I have commanded him.

[19 : 37] So was Jesus this prophet? Well, let me, let me go to a couple of passages in the New Testament to kind of give us the answer to this, right? And the first place I want to go is John chapter six.

Then I'm going to go to Hebrews one. So if you want to get to both of those places, you can. And in John chapter six, you'll recognize the story. This is the feeding of the 5,000 that John records, right? And in the feeding of the 5,000 that John records, you've got everybody who has been fed, and they're picking up all of the baskets and the food leftovers and everything. And when they do, there's this statement in John chapter six, verse 14, that says, therefore, when the people saw the sign which he had performed, they said, this is truly the prophet who is to come into the world. Now, what's fascinating about this is that Jesus, Jesus does not explicitly claim to be the prophet. But here's what he's doing, and can you understand why these people are saying this? Because they're comparing Jesus to Moses. They've just been fed bread, and now they're saying, we've been fed bread in the wilderness, surely this is the prophet.

[20 : 48] They're saying, listen, this guy's like Moses. Moses gave us bread in the wilderness and was a prophet. But the problem is is that these people have a mixed up conception.

because in verse 15, it says, so Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take him by force and to make him king, withdrew again to the mountain by himself alone.

They understood that he was the prophet. He didn't deny it, but he also didn't come out and say, yes, yes, I mean, I am that. He kind of stayed quiet and he went away from them because they wanted to come and make him king.

Now, you think about that. You say, well, wait a minute. Isn't that what was supposed to happen? He was supposed to be a king. Yeah, but there was a problem. The Jews wanted a physical king to rule over a physical kingdom in their physical world.

They wanted to get rid of Rome. They wanted to get rid of the wicked of the earth. They wanted to set up a kingdom where they would have physical blessings. Earthly blessings. Looking for this earthly king.

[21 : 59] All their expectation was that of a physical kingdom. And Christ would have none of their expectations. So, we see here that he's showing himself to be a prophet without claiming to be the prophet there in John 6.

A couple of places I'll mention just in passing. We won't turn there. in Acts chapter 3 and Acts chapter 7, both Peter and Stephen are preaching sermons in which they are lifting up Jesus as the Messiah.

And as they do, they both make reference and quote Deuteronomy 18 verses 15 and part of 18. They are saying Jesus is the prophet as they preach these sermons.

But I want to go to Hebrews chapter 1 because I love Hebrews 1. I love the passage here because it gives us some great insight. Let me read that for us.

God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways in these last days has spoken to us in his son whom he appointed heir of all things through whom also he made the world.

[23 : 17] And he is the radiance of his glory, the exact representation of his nature and upholds all things by the word of his power. And when he had made purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Now the book of Hebrews was written for Jews who for one reason or another had decided that living the Christian life was too rough.

It was too difficult. They wanted to go back to where they were making sacrifices. They wanted to go back to the old covenant and I think Paul wrote the book of Hebrews in order to encourage them that Christ is greater than the old.

And so in doing so he begins the whole thing by talking about that God spoke by prophets long ago. As a matter of fact the way the language is is that God spoke through these prophets in many ways and at many times.

So this idea is that way back then in many ways and many times and many variations God spoke through these prophets but in these times he spoke through his son.

[24 : 29] The parallel cannot be ignored. There's such a huge parallel here that God spoke through the prophets God spoke through his son. And what it says to us is that there was one way that God has always been dealing and God has always been dealing and God has always been dealing in this way but now things have changed.

now there comes this final part. Now there's this final word. He is now speaking through his son.

But there are differences between the speaking of the prophets in the Old Testament and the speaking of Jesus the son. Even though he's a prophet some of the things that are different man my throat I apologize for this.

The differences lie in the fact that this is the one through whom God made the world. This is the one who is the radiance of his glory. This is the one who's the exact imprint of his nature.

He is not one who was made by God and then given the words of God to speak but he is one who is God who is then the word from God who is also then the mouthpiece of God.

[25 : 46] Do you see what I'm saying? Like here's a prophet created by God he's a man he's living his life and God gives him a word and he speaks that word. But for Jesus Jesus is God Jesus knows the mind of God Jesus is God himself he is the very word from God and he is the one who speaks that word from God himself.

Jesus is the prophet because this is the final word from God to this world. let me just say that again because that has huge implications Jesus is the final word from God to this world.

And so when you hear somebody on the TV screen telling you that they have a word from God or they've heard from God you can just take to the bank that that is false because Jesus is the final word from God.

So we have these passages showing us yes Jesus is the prophet. Well the final question I have for you then is this why should this bring us joy? How should this bring us joy?

What is it we should really be thinking about? What are the implications of this that would help us to know more about who Christ is so that we would have joy in him? And I have three things for you.

[27 : 07] Number one it should bring us joy because it helps us to see that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament. Jesus fulfills all of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is about promises made and the New Testament is about promises kept. The promises made the promises kept and this man Jesus of Nazareth every time that Peter, Stephen, Paul, John whoever is writing whoever is speaking every time they go and they quote from the Old Testament they're showing you it is this Jesus of Nazareth who fulfills all of these things.

Paul even tells us that all the promises are yes and amen in Jesus Christ. He fulfills all of them. So as we look at Christ and we're looking at him today for ourselves this ought to bring us great joy because this means that the God who is faithful to hold these promises and fulfill these promises is the same God who deals with us today.

It ought to bring us joy because he is the fulfillment of thousands of years of prophecy. The second way that this ought to bring us joy is because Jesus as the prophet keeps us from dying by hearing from the Father face to face.

There are some who think to themselves that they need to see God in order to know that God is there.

[28 : 47] There are some who say that they want to hear from God himself in order to know God himself.

And I mean we do have the technology available now that if God wanted to he could plop down into Jerusalem with cameras all over to capture and speak to the entire world and display himself to all mankind.

But the whole world would die. let me let me let me just take this thought and chase out a a planned out rabbit for just a second.

See it's it's planned out rabbit so it's okay. I want to just talk to non-Christians for just a second and I want you to think about this. For argument's sake let's just say we could see God.

and we not die. There's a lot of people who say that they would believe in God if they could just see some sort of sign see some sort of miracle see some sort of neon sign drop out of the sky and say I'm here.

[30 : 06] A lot of people who say that and there's a lot of people who hold on to that and there's a lot of people saying I've prayed and prayed and prayed and he's never answered that prayer. And so let's just say for argument's sake that it could be true that God would speak and we wouldn't all die.

And so what would happen if God really did drop some sort of sign or some sort of miracle or some sort of presentation of himself right here in front of everybody? The question is would that be enough for you as an unbeliever to actually believe in God?

The answer of the Bible is no. There's a fascinating little passage in the Great Commission Matthew 28 17 Jesus disciples had met Jesus there on the mountain where he told them to go and here's Jesus the crucified resurrected Christ with his disciples who've known him for a long time and it says there verse 16 17 that they worshipped him but some doubted if the men who have been walking with him for three years see him face to face see him not only die but now they see him resurrected and they've been seeing him now for days resurrected and they doubt then do not tell me that you as an unbeliever would believe in God just because you see him with your eyes you need to understand that we never are convinced by what our eyes see we're only convinced by what our heart believes and the only way the heart believes is for the

Holy Spirit to take out the heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh to take and quicken us to take and call us through the gospel of Jesus Christ but Christians I want you to think about this and I want you to think about where you stand I want you to think about that day that you became a Christian I want you to think about that moment that you were converted because there ought to be a day you may not remember the date you may not remember the hour you may not even remember the circumstance but you know sitting here today you have been saved by God and the thing is that if Jesus is the prophet then you need to give thanks to God for the mercy that he's given to you by sending Jesus the prophet because if God had not sent Jesus as a prophet we would all be lost we would all be burned up by God's very voice and presence but because God has worked in your life because you are saved you love

Jesus the prophet you love his word you love to listen to his word you love to read his word and you do so because you are a Christian because the father has shown himself to you in his son do you realize that seeing the son is seeing the father he's the exact imprint of his nature well third and final we should rejoice not only because he's the fulfillment of the old testament not only because then we have this mercy because we're not killed by hearing God but because Jesus is the prophet we know what God wants from us we're not left without knowledge we have a clear revelation from God because Christ is the prophet if we had just been left with the old testament and Christ did not come we would only know half of what we needed to know but Christ has come he has fulfilled he has explained and he has given to us all that we need for life and for godliness we can rejoice because we know how to be saved we know how to live a holy life we know how a church ought to function we know who can be a pastor we know who can and cannot be married we know how married couples ought to treat one another we know how parents ought to parent their children we know how to deal with government overreach we know how to deal with the sinful world around us we know how to defend the faith we know how to live this godly life we're called to live because

[34 : 40] Christ is prophet the final word from the father the thing is we have to commit ourselves to saying I'm not going to try to figure this out the way the world does it is our joy that Christ has come as the prophet to tell us what we should believe and how we ought to act and if you can remember those two things that both the bible and the ministry of Jesus in part as a prophet prophet is that he's come to tell us what we should believe and how we ought to act that's the sum total of what the bible teaches the sum total of the ministry of the prophet my prayer is that as we go forward through this season and we look at all the things that come with christmas we won't rest on tradition we won't rest on what we've always done but we'll rest on what the word has said you know for the past few weeks on facebook we've been putting out the readings for john's gospel i hope that you're reading that or something else i mean you don't have to read john's gospel just because we're saying john's gospel if you're reading the prophets right now you're reading genesis whatever you do read it the whole thing it's all scripture but particularly if you've fallen off that wagon of reading scripture then let this season of christmas be this time to go back and say you know i'm gonna get back into it i'm gonna get back into reading the word reading the word because this is the word from god to us let's pray

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