

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### Ancient Prediction of Prophets

#### THE PROPHET OF DEUTERONOMY

Deut 18:18-22:

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, "How may we know the word which Yahweh has not spoken?" — when a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which Yahweh has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him.

The apostles and disciples of Jesus held a widespread belief that this remark was a prediction of him. See Luke 24:27, John 1:45 and 5:46, Acts 3:22 and 7:37. However, several factors speak against such identification.

- Like Moses, he will be a human agent, not a divine agent. Jesus was a divine being, incarnate.
- Like Moses, he will be appointed by Yahweh. Jesus, as Yahweh, would not appoint himself.
- Yahweh will instruct him on the message he is to bring.
- His words will be predictive. He will describe events that will then unfold.
- His predictive abilities can be tested against reality. He will show by his messages that he is a true servant of Yahweh.
- The context suggests that he comes at a time when other mortals presume to speak for God. But their claimed commissions will be denied by their inability to make accurate predictions.
- The presence of false prophets suggests the end of the age, and crises of culmination in the affairs of this age.
- This prophet will have his credentials established by Yahweh in order that Yahweh can accomplish the physical salvation of his people.
- Moses and this prophet work in similar roles. Moses worked at the time of Egyptian bondage; this prophet will work at a time of world judgment.

- Jewish and Christian tradition did not assign identification of this prophet to the Old Testament prophets. The generations recognized that this individual was unique in his role, and not an ancient prophet.
- The generations also recognized that this individual would come at a unique time of world destiny. They did not view him as coming during periods of ordinary human affairs.
- To fit this individual to the historic Jesus it was necessary to view the life of Jesus as an important element of world change. For the apostles and disciples the impact of the life of Jesus, and especially his visitations after his resurrection, displayed this unique and important world difference. Thus it was easy for the gospel writers to ascribe this prediction to Jesus.
- But Paul does not seem to have been influenced by this opinion. His letters do not reflect such identification.
- This individual was to come "from among their brethren." It was natural to assume this meant someone from among the Jews. Unfortunately, for this Jewish view, the statements were made to Moses, at a time when all twelve tribes of Israel were identifiable. An individual who would arise from among their brethren could be from among those people of Israel who were not Jews, if such people still existed.
- If we were to follow Paul's views of a *spiritual Israel* this factor does not exclude the possibility that this individual would arise *from among their brethren*. Thus again his origin need not be as a Jew.

Given these elements this individual will arise as part of the deep world crises, at the end of the age. He will appear today.

#### THE COMING OF ELIJAH THE PROPHET

Malachi 4:5-6

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Yahweh comes. And he will turn back the hearts of the fathers toward their children, and the hearts of children toward their fathers, lest I come and smite them with utter destruction.

The gospel writers assigned this prediction to John the Baptist, Matt 11:14, Mark 9:11, and Luke 1:17. The gospel tradition has Jesus making such assignment. But the words of Jesus are debatable. His remarks in Matthew and Mark could be viewed as allusion, with John the Baptist as someone who appears with the spirit of Elijah, not as literal confirmation.

It is essential to understanding of the Malachi prophecy that this individual will come before the great and terrible day of the LORD. The Hebrew word *lipnee*, translated as "before," is used in a wide variety of applications. It is an adverbial form derived from *pawneem*, the word for *face*. The sense is *in the face of*. This individual will come at a

time of deep world crises, when he works in the face of the threat of total destruction, under the same circumstances as the individual predicted in Deuteronomy. He will provide warning of that day.

As with John the Baptist the use of the name *Elijah* betokens the spirit of this individual, not a physical rebirth, or reincarnation, of Elijah. Elijah, John the Baptist, and this individual all display similar spirit in their work for Yahweh in unfolding world destiny.

A major difficulty with translation of this passage is the seeming contradiction between the intent of verses five and six. Verse five says that the great and terrible day of the LORD will come while verse six, according to traditional views, shows that somehow this servant will turn the hearts of the generations toward one another, thus to avoid that great and terrible day. The conditional clause is in the last word, normally translated as *curse*. The Hebrew word *chayrem* means *utter destruction*, not *curse*. *Curse* is assumed from *utter destruction*, and hence is a derivative sense. By turning the hearts of the generations toward one another, thus to care for one another, the work of the servant helps to avoid failure of God's program. He helps to avoid utter destruction. However, he does not help to avoid the judgment.

Why is it important to this salvation that he turn the hearts of the fathers and their children toward one another? The answer lies in the increasing estrangement of the generations as the world neared the end of the age. Young people experienced escalating intensity of disappointment and disillusionment as they faced an ever more fearful world given them by their fathers. They went through periods of rebellion, and then utter hopelessness as time wore on. In the last years, before the final crises, dreaded plagues and destabilization of the nations caused a reassessment of moral and spiritual priorities. Some sought recourse in spiritist practices, as providing "love" and "kindness" the world could not offer. Others sought salvation in reformed religions. Still others resigned all efforts to find personal consolation; they took one day at a time. As events unfolded those who truly trusted in God learned of the salvation of the world, and their role in it. As the blood baths of sacrifice from the spiritists broke upon them they renewed compassion toward one another. Now they became acutely aware of their dependence upon one another. Now they turned toward one another.

### A NEW TEACHER FROM THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Melchizedek was not the only unique personality described in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Large portions of the scrolls were biblical. All books of the Old Testament were represented except the Book of Esther. Several different fragments of the *Book of Enoch* were found, along with fragments of other Apocryphal texts known since antiquity. The nature of the cave discoveries suggests a reference library used by the Qumran community.

Material was also found of a genre never before known. This last group was published by Theodore Gaster under his title *The Dead Sea Scriptures*. Doubleday Anchor Books issued three editions in 1956, 1964 and 1976, each time expanded by further cave discoveries.

The materials published by Gaster include:

1. *A Manual of Discipline* for a future body of people who "flee into the wilderness,"
2. *A Zadokite Document*, previously known from Egyptian discoveries and offering other instructions to a unique body of people dedicated in the "end times,"
3. *The Book of Hymns*, also known as *Psalms of Thanksgiving*,
4. Exposition on passages from several biblical prophets,
5. *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness*, and the
6. *Text on Melchizedek*, among other pieces.

In his *Introduction* Gaster describes a dedicated community, a regenerated House of Israel. They view themselves as a small remnant who have stayed faithful to the ancient Covenant:

"... thereby ensuring the continuance of God's people and the eventual cleansing of His land from the stain of guilt." "... They picture themselves as going out into the wilderness to receive a new Covenant." This is "... no 'New Testament' in the Christian sense of the term, no abrogation or substitution of the old Covenant, but simply a new affirmation of it."

"There is, however, one crucial difference between this community and its remote prototype; it is not waiting to receive the Law; it already possesses it. Its aim is simply to assert that Law, to deliver it from the realm of darkness in which it had become engulfed. The Torah — that is, the Divine Teaching (or Guidance) as revealed to Moses — has, it is held, been successively garbled and perverted by 'false expositors'. The community's main purpose is to exemplify and promulgate the true interpretation. It bases that interpretation on a kind of 'apostolic succession', begun by the prophets and continued by a series of inspired leaders each of whom is known as 'the correct expositor' or 'right teacher ...'"

"Just as Israel had been led of old by these prophets and teachers, so, it is held, a new Prophet and a new Teacher (perhaps, indeed, one and the same person), will arise at the end of the present era to usher in the Golden Age."

Gaster's word Law is derived from the Hebrew word *torah*. The meaning of the word is *teaching*, not some holy command promulgated by God. Law is a derived meaning. If the Torah, the teaching of Moses, came from God, then it was assumed that all mortals must obey it, hence it is God's Law. Since those instructions contained many new commandments for physical, moral, and social conduct they were regarded as God's Law. But this view degrades the intent of *divine teaching*. God is a compassion-

ate, not dictatorial, Father. He is concerned about his created children, and wants them to love him. When men become fearful of him they lose their affection for him. They then turn to rote obedience, without reflective thought or feeling.

Since the advent of Jesus, and the larger enlightenment he provided, the Teaching is not limited to the words given to Moses. Jesus gave us better understanding of a compassionate Father who is concerned about his created children. Indeed, the many generations perverted the divine teaching, converting it to their fanciful desires.

Although Gaster's statements imply a continuous *apostolic succession* this is not correct. The succession comes at times of world crises, and not continually through the generations held in blindness by God. Gaster expressed the thought of inspired leaders appearing through time but this also is not correct. The generations have shown the blindness that afflicted them, without the corrective help of inspired teachers.

Personal attributes of the New Teacher are explicitly described in the document Gaster called *The Book of Hymns* or *Psalms of Thanksgiving*. Gaster obtained these titles from the forms of expression found within the scroll. Many hymns begin with the phrase "*I give thanks unto Thee, Oh Lord, . . .*"

The scroll is written in the first person, as though penned by the individual who is the subject of its presentation. This unique style caused modern scholarship to assume it was written by a contemporary leader of the Quamran community. They issued many fanciful speculations on possible candidates to this supposed authorship, even including Jesus and John the Baptist! Unfortunately, that scholarship is blinded by its many secular assumptions. The content of the document well specifies its application in time.

*"When the shafts of corruption fly, with none to turn them back."*

*"When they are hurled apace with no hope of escape."*

*"When the hour of judgment strikes."*

*"A fire that consumes all foundations of clay."*

*"When the earth cries out in anguish for the havoc wrought in the world."*

*"When the world's foundations rock and reel."*

*"Warfare the like of which has never been."*

The scroll is a series of statements of thanksgiving by the individual to God. Gaster provides translation from more than eighteen columns of Hebrew text, although segments of the scroll are missing. The statements of thanksgiving are unique in several respects.

(Other, more complete translations are now available, but in the secular godless views of the translators. Gaster attempted to retain the devout tone of the documents.)

- If the New Teacher, expressing himself in the *Psalms*, is to appear at the end of the age he could not have penned those words himself. Someone else must have done so for him.

- If the words are truly predictive, if they contain knowledge of someone who was to appear, if they foresee the future, they could not have been invented by human authors. A divine hand had to be at work with the scribes who did the actual physical transcription. This could have been Melchizedek. Or it also could have been Jesus, since he was often within a half-days journey of the Quamran community.

The question then arises as to the purpose of the Songs. Since someone other than the New Teacher created the text, that other someone had to know in minute detail the life and personality of the New Teacher. But why could the New Teacher not create his own *Songs of Thanksgiving*? Why surrogate expression?

- The time and place of his appearance may prevent him from doing so. The environmental conditions of general disbelief may prohibit such devout statements.
- He may not be able to articulate such explicit statements because of his personal limitations.
- The individual would not aspire to such explicit formulations out of personal humility.
- The expressed close relationship between God and the individual would not have been presumed by a human mortal. The document is used as a vehicle by which God shows the individual the common awareness of that close relationship.
- The sensitivity of the individual to God is conveyed as statements of appreciation for opportunity of such unique service. If God were involved in the formulation of the thoughts and feelings of thanksgiving it shows in more graphic manner his care for the individual.
- This method establishes a high degree of intimacy between God and the individual. The mortal comes to sense how closely God worked to produce this intimate form of communication, and expression of care.
- It establishes him as a unique person on the scene of world destiny. What other individual in the flow of time had such unprecedented communication?
- The usefulness of the mortal to God's service is shown in the expenditure of time and labor of the Quamran scribes, and preservation over two thousand years, along with well nigh miraculous discovery, to convey to the individual the nature of his unique and crucial service.
- A sense of predestination is captured in a way that approaches Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, but not with direct contact.
- The document, as a public vehicle, demonstrates to brothers and sisters that communication with the individual is not through open contact.
- The document serves as a vehicle of communication that could not be prosecuted another way, while still preserving the exercise of faith. The constraints of the earthly period prohibit direct communications.

- The demonstration of faith is exhibited by the mortal's sincere and trustful acceptance of this form of communication. This helps to build a reliance on God without direct and open contact. The individual learns to build a complete faith in God's personal hand in his life.
- He could not be subjected to high spiritual visions as was Paul on the road to Damascus. The use of such phenomena, and possible confusion with the techniques used by the fallen Prince, might create dangerous psychological dilemmas.
- He would not be subjected to audible phenomena or voices directing his service, for similar reasons.
- He would not openly or directly experience contact by spirit beings. This could cause psychological difficulties to prevent clear personal decisions.
- Direct contact may be too devastating. The modern secular era effectively prevents conscious contact because of general social disbelief, or the individual is too fragile for such methods.
- A strong element of faith is preserved. Without direct communication the individual can serve as an example to others. That example would be undermined by direct communication. Faith and decisions are reinforced, not diluted.
- The document serves as a vehicle of reassurance through long periods of life vicissitudes. The human mortal may experience doubts about his service through many years of fruitless exercise. He would have recourse to periodic examination and reaffirmation of his call.
- The document carries a special display of prophetic power. Paul stated that he was known from before the foundation of the earth. Jeremiah stated that he was known in the womb of his mother; his service was known before he was born. This document manifests explicit foreknowledge by God and his ability to communicate with specific human mortals over large stretches of time.
- The document serves as an illustration to a dedicated community. If brothers and sisters come to recognize the deep destiny display in the mechanical execution of the scrolls, in its creation, transcription, and preservation over two thousand years, they also may come to recognize the personal hand of God, not only in the life of the Teacher, but also in their own lives. They also become an intimate part of destiny.
- The document serves to reinforce intimacy between God and his destiny reserve. Only the doubts and psychological reservations of this generation prevent them from developing a similar intimate relationship.

I offer illustration of two complete *Psalms* to show the nature of the writing. I shall go on to other quotations from the document, to show the role of this unique personality, and also the role of his brothers and sisters.

I draw directly from Gaster's translation. He attempted to retain the devout tone of the writing, as well as the literal meaning. He places the style in terminology that captures sincerity and reverence. Although the translated style may hark back to former times it replaces a loss our modern secular expressions cannot capture.

### Dead Sea Psalm #2

*I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, for Thou art my strength and my stronghold,*

*Thou hast delivered my soul from all works of unrighteousness.  
For Thou hast put truth in my heart and righteousness in my spirit,  
Along with all gifts of Thy wisdom;*

*And hast crushed the loins of them that have risen up against me.  
Thou bringest me cheer, O Lord, amid the sorrow of mourning,  
Words of peace amid havoc, stoutness of heart when I faint,  
Fortitude in the face of affliction.*

*Thou has given free flow of speech to my stammering lips;  
Stayed my drooping spirit with vigor and strength;*

*Made my feet to stand firm when they stood where wickedness reigns.  
To transgressors I am a snare, but healing to them that repent,  
prudence to the unwary, temperance to the rash.*

*Thou hast made me a reproach and a derision to them that live by deceit,  
But a symbol of truth and understanding to all whose way is straight.  
I am become an eyesore unto the wicked, a slander on the lips of the unbridled;  
scoffers knash their teeth.*

*I am a song unto transgressors, and the hordes of the wicked rage against me;*

*Like ocean gales they storm which, when their billows rage, cast up mire and dirt.*

*Yet, Thou hast set me as a banner in the vanguard of Righteousness,  
As one who interprets with knowledge deep, mysterious things;  
As a touchstone for them that seek the truth,  
A standard for them that love correction.*

*To them that preach misguidance I am but a man of strife;  
But to them that see straight, a very symbol of peace.*

*To them that pursue delusion I am but a gust of zeal;  
Men that live by deceit roar against me like the roar of many waters.  
Naught is there in their thoughts save mischievous designs.*

*When opening the fount of knowledge to all that have understanding,  
Thou hast set a man's life to rights by the words of Thy mouth,  
And hast taught unto him Thy lesson and put understanding in his heart.*

*But they thrust him back into the pit. In place of these Thy gifts they offer a witless folk stammering lips and barbarous tongue.*

*Wandering astray, they rush headlong to their doom.*

**Dead Sea Psalm #6**

*I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast freed my soul from the pit,  
And drawn me up from the slough of hell to the crest of the world.*

*So walk I on uplands unbounded and know that there is hope for that which  
Thou didst mold out of dust to have consort with things eternal.*

*For lo, Thou hast taken a spirit distorted by sin, and purged it of the taint of  
much transgression,*

*And given it a place in the host of holy beings, and brought it into commun-  
ion with the Sons of Heaven.*

*Thou hast made a mere man to share the lot of the Spirits of Knowledge,  
To praise Thy name in their chorus and rehearse Thy wondrous deed before  
all Thy works.*

*I, that am molded of clay, what am I?*

*I, that am kneaded with water, what is my worth?*

*I, that have taken my stand where wickedness reigns, that have cast my lot  
with the froward;*

*Whose soul has lodged like a beggar in a place of wild unrest;*

*I, whose every step is amid ruin and rout--*

*On what strength of mine own may I count,*

*When corruptions snares are laid, and the nets of Wickedness spread,*

*When far and wide on the waters Frowardness sets her drags,*

*When the shafts of Corruption fly with none to turn them back,*

*When they are hurled apace with no hope of escape;*

*When the hour of judgment strikes,*

*When the lot of God's anger is cast upon the abandoned,*

*When his fury is poured forth upon dissemblers,*

*When the final doom of His rage falls on all worthless things;*

*When the torrents of Death do swirl, and there is no escape;*

*When the rivers of Belial burst forth from their banks--*

*Rivers that are like fire devouring all (. . .),*

*Rivers whose runnels destroy green tree and dry tree alike,*

*Rivers that are like fire which sweeps with flaming sparks, devouring all that  
drink their waters--*

*A fire which consumes all foundations of clay, every solid bedrock;*

*When the foundations of the mountains become a raging blaze,*

*When granite roots are turned to streams of pitch,*

*When the flame devours down to the deep abyss,*

*When the roots of Belial burst forth unto hell itself;*

*When the depths of the abyss are in turmoil and cast up mire in abundance,*

*When the earth cries out in anguish for the havoc wrought in the world,*

*When all its depths are aquake, and all that is on it quails and quivers in  
mighty havoc;*

*When with His mighty roar God thunders forth,*

*And His holy welkin trembles, and His glorious truth is revealed,*

*And the hosts of heaven give forth their voice,  
And the world's foundations rock and reel,  
When warfare waged by the soldiers of heaven sweeps through the world,  
And turns not back until final doom,  
— Warfare the like of which has never been.*

It is obvious the individual lives amid strife, severe affliction, and dissension, amid a great contest in belief and in dedication. The world scoffs at these teachings, but those who love God know the value of their great revelations. This individual serves as *a banner in the vanguard of Righteousness, as one who interprets with knowledge deep, mysterious things.*

Psalm #6 shows the destiny context and world conditions at the time of service of this individual. Is there any doubt as to the time and place of these events? What ancient mortal could have devised such dramatic and predictive statements? How could such concepts have occurred to the ancients? Is there any question as to the divine authorship required to make such forecasts?

Who can fail to recognize a judgment that, literally, turns granite into pitch? Or *when the shafts of corruption fly, with none to turn them back, . . . when they are hurled apace, . . . when the hour of judgment strikes? Warfare the like of which has never been!*

This individual, this servant, feels that he joins the heavenly host in their understanding. He experiences the meaning of holiness and praises his Lord for bringing him into communion with the Sons of Heaven. But what mortal would dare to make such comparisons? Would any mortal, molded of clay and kneaded with water, presume to such expressions? Only divine beings would venture into such style.

I shall now offer a few other brief quotations to show the specific application of this important document.

**So, for mine own part, because I have clung to Thee,  
I shall yet arise and stand upright against them that revile me;  
And my hand shall be upon all that hold me in contempt.  
Though Thou show Thy power through me, they regard me not.  
Howbeit, Thou in Thy might, hast shed upon me the Perfect Light,  
And bedaubed not their faces with shame  
That have let themselves be found when I sought them out,  
Who, in common accord, have pledged themselves to Thee.**

Through his work the individual exhibits unusual insights. Note the common accord and pledge of dedication to God. This is a work of faith, and of decisions. The statements suggest that brothers and sisters are willing to accept the extraordinary meaning of the teachings of this individual.

**Through me has Thou illumined the faces of full many,  
And countless be the times Thou hast shown Thy power through me.  
For Thou hast made known unto me Thy deep, mysterious things,  
And hast shared Thy secret with me and so shown forth Thy power;  
And before the eyes of full many this token stands revealed,  
That Thy glory may be shown forth, and all living know of Thy power.**

Again, indications are given how others may accept the teachings of this individual. But their response is far more than mere acceptance. They recognize the spiritual soundness of that which he teaches and make supreme decisions based on that spiritual sense. The use of the word “token” shows a humility and lack of charismatic fervor in the nature of the individual.

**Thou hast sheltered me, O my God, in the face of all mankind,  
And hidden Thy teaching within me, until it be shown unto me that the  
hour of Thy triumph is come.**

This statement shows that the individual waited for indications of God’s good time.

Many of the Psalms are designed to express the feelings of this servant.

**They purposed to trammel my spirit, to wear down all my strength,  
With blasphemous mystic lore, converting the works of God into that  
which they guiltily imagined.**

This again shows the degraded spiritual environment in which the individual lives and works.

Other statements tell much of the personality and attitudes of the servant.

**Thou knowest also the nature of this, Thy servant, how I have not relied  
upon the things of the world lifting my heart in pride and vaunting my strength.  
The soul of this, Thy servant, abhors all wealth and gain; in abundance  
of worldly delights his heart has no pleasure. Nay, in Thy covenant does my  
heart rejoice, and Thy truth it is that regales my soul.**

Psalm #15 has many parallels with the first few verses of Isaiah 50, and some highly specific statements.

**Though mine eyes sleep not at night . . .  
Though mine eyes fail . . .  
For my father has renounced me,  
And my mother has abandoned me to Thee.**

The autobiographical remarks show knowledge of intimate personal relationships and physical conditions of the servant. Concern for God’s people, and the responsibility of executing this service, weigh heavily on the servant. Irregular sleeping hours reflect that mental and spiritual tension.

Failure of the eyes could be from strain in a younger person; they could be from the deteriorations of age. Most probably the latter is intended.

The attitudes of his parents condition their relationship. The father does not understand the unusual relationship of the servant with God, the conditions of the age, new revelations, or how those elements affect the conduct of the servant. The mother may recognize the sincerity of the servant but is at a loss on how to deal with his unusual behavior. She turns it over to God.

The document certainly conveys mighty sustenance for a servant who is dedicated to God. It also carries mighty sustenance for those who might elect to join this servant in an awesome demonstration of faith and service.

## AN ASSESSMENT

The Old Testament prophecies of a new teacher, or a new prophet, when weighed against the material from the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, show that a unique individual was destined to appear on the world stage at a time of great social, physical and spiritual crises.

The descriptions of this individual show that he does not engage in a work of personal salvation, as Christianity has emphasized for two thousand years. He works for the salvation of mankind and a new spiritual era for this planet.

This servant labors to inform people who shall arise to form a new covenant, not as an invention for a modern new age, but as groups who rededicate themselves to the old covenant and to God. These rededicated groups then flee into the wilderness to escape the destructions forecast by the prophets. Without the work of this servant they would not be aware of the need to form a “new covenant” nor would they recognize the need for physical preservation of God’s dedicated people.

The idea of covenant carries with it the arrangements made between God and man, both at the time of Abraham and the time of Moses. Although it is not my purpose here to discuss the genetic components of this covenant, it is important to recognize that much of God’s work over the past four thousand years involves attention toward those who are of Abrahamic descent, whether they are of the true vine or merely wild branches. Refer Romans 11:13-27.

A new life for this world is stirring in the birth pangs of the new planetary age. As a woman may deliver a beautiful child with great pain and turmoil, just such beautiful new age will spring forth from the cosmic trauma of the close of this present planetary age. We may challenge God that he would subject us to such severe tribulation, but we should remember that he is truly in command, and that his wisdom far exceeds the myopic visions of human kind.