

Clough Deuteronomy Session 42

Deuteronomy 18:9-22; Israel's Prophets—Absolutely Unique in Human History
Fellowship Chapel; 11 January 2011

On the outline you'll see that we're finishing chapter 18, verses 9-22, the authority and nature of Israel's prophets. And this turns out to be a critical office, it's not really an office, the prophet, it's different. We've covered the judges, we've covered the kings, we've covered the princes. On the outline there I've given you the three principles: judges, had to proceed carefully with rules of evidence, protections against "lobbying," applying pre-existing law. And then the other one with the blank, a strong central government—a monarchy is NOT necessary for a successful culture if, and this is the big "if" in Israel's history, "if there is a common acceptance of biblical law... if there is a common acceptance of biblical law you don't need the king. The problem is they needed the king because the society was in spiritual rebellion. And a spiritually rebellious society always destroys freedom. Tyranny develops from chaos, or the threat of chaos. So that's why we have tyranny.

Then the next point is that after Pentecost, so we dealt with the judges, we dealt with the monarchy, the king, and then the third point is after Pentecost, in that blank, after Pentecost there is no need for a special priesthood... there is no need for a special priesthood. And the reason: that function has been transferred into heaven with our great High Priest. And as we said last week, that third point, that third office of the priest, that was carried over into the Church largely through the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic church traditions, based really on the priesthood in Israel. So it was a transfer of the priestly function out of the Old Testament and into the New Testament. But there's no theological reason for a priesthood, the priesthood function is done away with because of the finished work of Christ. That's the argument of the book of Hebrews.

Now those are the three offices we've already looked at, judges, kings and priest. Tonight we're going to deal with the last one, and we're going to finish chapter 18 and we have to deal with a leftover problem. All of those three offices, or none of them really, could replace Moses and so here's the problem for Israel: who will bring back a Word from God concerning the status of the nation under the terms of the Mosaic Contract? Who's bringing that revelation, who's going to do that, it's not the king, the king wasn't even in existence at the beginning of the nation; it's not the priests, they have the Urim and the Thummim, but that's all just for battle decisions and so on, but that's not a living connection with God. And the judges don't have the ability to get extra revelation so that leaves a hole, that leaves a gap, a functioning gap, and so now we deal with that functional gap.

And that's Roman numeral II, the authority and nature of Israel's prophets. We started last week into the first part of the discussion, verses 9-14, we're going to just touch on that tonight and then finish with verses 15-22. Obviously with a gap, with a lapse of a "hotline to God" so to speak, there arose a problem and God anticipated this and that's why in verses 9-14 he says, "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of these nations. [10] There will not be found among you

anyone who passes son or daughter through the fire." That was a horrible way of discerning God's will. But these are all pagan, common, attested processes. We know this from archeology, we know this from history. [10] "...or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, [11] or one who conjures spells, or a medium or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead." And the witchcraft and these kinds of things were attempts by unbelieving people to discern knowledge of the future.

And so that little parenthesis (1) under A., Knowledge of the future is virtually priceless. I mean, it's very, very important to have knowledge of the future, and if you don't have knowledge of the future you don't really know where you're going and you do not have a sense of meaning and purpose in history; history is just going nowhere if you don't have a sense of purpose. That's why eschatology is so important from a Christian point of view. And (2) in paganism there is no Creator/creature distinction so any "god" might be able to be manipulated," in other words, God, from a pagan view there were many gods and goddesses, but they weren't looked upon as we view the God of the Bible. They were looked upon as sort of super men and super women, that they had the foibles of fallen man, they fought, they cheated, they killed each other, they were violent, it was just that they had more power than man, that's all. And so because they were seen in that light, the thought was that I could manipulate them, I could lobby them, I could influence them if I did certain things for them. And so it was a form of manipulation.

Now I want to take you to 1 Samuel 28 because here was a classic instance where God used a witch and much to her chagrin something happened. So if you'll turn to 1 Samuel 28, Saul, here's the first king now, so that shows you how quickly the culture deteriorated. Here's the first king, Saul, and he wants to know about the future. So instead of consulting a prophet what does he do? Well, the prophet Samuel has died so it says in verse 1, "Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel.... [2] So David said to Achish, Surely you know what your servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever. [3] Now Samuel had died..." so that's the background, the prophet has died, "and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land." He was obedient that way because the prophet told him that's what he should do.

[4] "Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and camped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they camped at Gilboa. [5] When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. [6] And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or the Urim, or by the prophets." Now there were some prophets who had studied under Samuel and he wasn't getting an answer. So now he decides he's going to get an answer. So here's what he does.

[7] "Then Saul said to his servants, find me a woman who is a medium," so here we go, "that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor. [8] So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, Please conduct a s^oance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to

you." Now the background was that these people would claim to speak with the dead, and this is not just something out of the ancient history. This comes up to modern times. It was almost 20 years ago or more, 30, maybe 40 years ago that you had Bishop Pike who was an ordained bishop in the Anglican Church who, I believe he lost his son, either through an auto accident or something, and he wanted to contact his son, so he went to Canada and contacted a medium and then put it on television. Here is the Bishop in the Anglican Church consulting a Canadian witch so he could talk to his son. And he went on and on and said oh, this witch lady told me all kinds of things that only my son would have known, and so forth. Well, that activity is demonic. You're not talking to the dead, what you're doing is these people are talking to demons who know of the dead. That's how the information is originating; it's not originating because they're actually talking to a dead person. Necromancy and that sort of activity is really demonic. Watch what happens here, a very interesting story. [9] "Then the woman said to him, Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" She knew that Saul had kicked all these people out so she's going to discover he's there and now her life, she thinks, is at stake. [10] "And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." Now at that point what is King Saul doing? He's guaranteeing that he will not enforce the Torah, the Law of God. And he's doing it with an oath in Yahweh's name. This gives you insight into this guy's personality. [11] "Then the woman said, Whom shall I bring up for you? And he said, Bring up Samuel for me. [12] And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice," in the Hebrew she screamed, "And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul! [13] And the king said to her, Do not be afraid. What do you see? And the woman said to Saul, I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth. [14] So he said to her, What is his form? And she said, An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. [15] Now Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

What do you observe in this little narrative that tells you that necromancy was basically fallacious? She's surprised when somebody really does come from the dead. See, something unusual has happened in this sΘance; she's not used to seeing this. So that tells you that whatever is going on here with Samuel is unusual enough for her to be alarmed that this isn't the normal operating procedure of a sΘance, because now, under God's sovereignty in some idiomatic way He's actually bringing Samuel up or an image of Samuel. So Samuel is talking, and "Samuel said, Why have you disturbed me.... And Saul said, I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me any more, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do. [16] Then Samuel said: So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? [17] And the LORD has done for Himself, as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David."

Remember later in the book of Psalms David prays, O Lord, take not Your spirit from me, and people take that into Christian liturgy and so on. Well, the Holy Spirit, once He indwells is always with us; that request in that psalm is actually David is praying that his dynasty, his dynastic rights won't be taken from him, like it was from Saul. When the Spirit was taken from Saul, it didn't mean he was lost, it didn't mean he lost his salvation, it meant he lost his dynasty, that was over. And this has happened, and that's why God wasn't speaking to him. It was time for David to reign. But in this case, he tries to consult a medium.

Now I talked to you about Pike but here's even a more interesting, and in some sense alarming bit of information. I was at a conference several years ago by Martin and Deidre Bobgan, who had spend most of their live studying psychology and how it's infiltrated the Christian church, and he got to mentioning in one of his lectures about Karl Gustav Jung, J-u-n-g. Carl Gustav Jung is considered to be one of the great fathers of psychiatry in the United States. Now in talking to Bobgan he made this reference to the fact that Jung consulted demons when he was creating the base of modern psychiatry. And here's what he said: this is Jung's words. I asked Bobgan for the quote material. He's talking about the different spirits that he consulted, the dreams. And he says: "In what myth does man live nowadays? In the Christian myth. And he answered me, do you live in it. I asked myself to be honest, the answer was no, for me it is not what I live by," because he had denied the Christian faith of his father. Many of these guys came out of Christian homes. Karl Marx knew about the gospel of Jesus Christ; these aren't stupid people that never had contact with the gospel. And he goes on and he talks about how he got these ideas. And so it says, "Jung turned psychoanalysis into a religion. He delved deeply into the occult, practiced necromancy, and had daily contact with disembodied spirits which he called archetypes." He didn't call them spirits, he called them archetypes. And he said that "that was the beginning of writing his book, The Seven Sermons to the Dead, in which he says it just flowed out of him." He said, "This was a significant event, the soul, the anima, establishes the relationship to the unconscious." Remember the words, if you've taken a psychology course they always talk about the unconscious. Well, it's these guys, Freud and Jung who developed that whole idea. And now we find, if we study their writings, that they were in contact, or at least Jung was, in contact with these demonic spirits, which now means that the whole archetype, the whole foundation of psychiatry comes from where?

Listen to this, he's talking about a fantasy where he dreamed that his soul left his body. "This was a significant event, the soul, the anima, establishes the relationship to the unconscious. In a certain sense this is also a relationship to the collectivity of the dead, for the unconscious corresponds to the mythic land of the dead, the land of ancestors. If, therefore, one has a fantasy of the soul vanishing, this means it has withdrawn into the unconscious, or into the land of the dead, and there it produces a mysterious animation and gives visible form to ancestral traits. The collective contents, like a medium, it gives the dead a chance to manifest themselves." And then he goes on to say he had no problem contacting the dead, which he considered disembodied spirits. He said, "These conversations with the dead formed a kind of prelude to what I had to communicate to the world about the unconscious, a kind of pattern of order or interpretation of its content." And then Bobgan

writes, much of what Jung wrote was inspired by such entities. Jung had his own familiar spirit, which he called Philemon." So he even named it.

And here's what Jung himself writes. "Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life. Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversations with him and he said things which I had not consciously thought, for I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I. Psychologically Philemon represented superior insight. He was a mysterious figure to me. At times he seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living personality. I went walking up and down the garden with him, and to me he was what the Indians call a guru."

And then he later writes, "But there was a demonic strength in me, and from the beginning there was no doubt in my mind that I must find the meaning of what I was experiencing in these fantasies. When I endured these assaults of the unconscious I had an unswerving conviction that I was obeying a higher will, and that feeling continued to uphold me until I had mastered the text. There was a demon in me, and in the end it's presence proved decisive; it overpowered me and if I was at times ruthless it was because I was in the grip of the demon." This is the father of psychiatry.

So when you look at 1 Samuel 28, this is not just a Bible story; this is the Word of God warning us about this fact that there's real stuff going on that we really don't understand and we, as Christians, have to avoid this at all costs. It is not God's will to consult demons when we have the Word of God to find out what the future holds.

Okay, back to Deuteronomy. That was the no-no section, that was what God said I don't want priests, judges and kings to mess with this stuff when they're trying to find out God's will. Well, that's fine to say that, what positively does God give then; if they can't do that, what are they supposed to do, so that starts in verse 15. So Deuteronomy 18:15-22, that completes this chapter. So let's watch what goes through here. This is a whole new thing that develops.

[15] "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, [16] according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' [17] And the Lord said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. [18] I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. [19] And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. [20] 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 prophet shall die.' [21] And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'-- [22] when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

So let's go through this passage and see what we're talking about. The first thing is that we're dealing here with revelation, and that's why we have this slide, the doctrine of revelation, you've seen it before, but again we go over it because this is so important that we get this down. If this isn't true you can trash the Bible; the whole point here is that the Bible presumes God has spoken in history. And it's so simple, I don't know why people have such a hard time with this. I was just dialoguing with someone who was attacking me on the website, and attacking some teachings that I had done on the Bible and history and government, and it turned out he was a socialist and a Marxist so we were having an interesting dialogue, but the point is, when you deal with these people, very intelligent, well-educated people, the whole point is if God has actually spoken in history, let's just, for the sake of argument, let's just assume that. If that really happened, doesn't that mean that that information that He spoke takes priority over human information. I mean, isn't the Word of God inherently authoritative. So people like to talk about revelation and what they mean is mysticism and so on.

So remember these five characteristics and we're going to look at characteristic number five tonight, before we were just going through the rest of them. But remember, just to review, revelation includes information transfer from God to man, it's not an mmm, it's not some sort of mystical feeling, it's a verbal communication like you get when you read e-mail, that you can record what He said at Sinai; I keep saying that over and over but when you get in conversations and you get this static from people, oh, the Bible is just a story book, back off a minute, and say now just a second; if there is a God and He has spoken, that makes the Bible the most important book on earth. And that makes it more authoritative than either me or you, it's His Word. So that's the discussion so you can pan it but then what reasons do you have that God doesn't exist, or He exists and hasn't spoken. But it's verbal, verbal information.

It's personal, and that means if God has spoken it obligates us to respond and that dissolves neutrality. If God speaks to us and tells us what He wants us to do, and we don't do it, that's a response. So He doesn't leave us with a sort of a neutral zone. The third thing to remember about biblical revelation is that it's historical, it actually has happened in history, it's not some book that dropped out of heaven; it's the story of history, it's a story that God not only speaks, but God also acts. That's why on the website I thought of this, and I should use it more in teaching, revelation is God's "show and tell," maybe that's a better way of saying it, "God's show and tell," He shows us something but He also talks to us and He explains what He is doing and why He is doing it. That's the historical side. Comprehensive, when God speaks it has implications all over the board, as we see in Deuteronomy, banking, finance, real estate, climate, all kinds of things are important because it's the God of the universe speaking. But tonight we want to concentrate on the last one, and that is the prophets. It's a prophetic line and to make that point I brought in a Hebrew Bible and I put into your handout that chart, that big long chart and I'd like you to look carefully at it. This is a Hebrew Bible, and we won't have Q and A tonight because of the snow but you'll see how, on the edge of it I've put all the books in the Hebrew Bible there and you'll see there's three sections. And those three

sections, Jesus refers to these three sections, because He used the Hebrew Bible, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

But if you look at how the Jews collected the books under those three categories, do you notice some funny stuff going on. Look, for example, the Law, that's the Pentateuch, that we know as the first five books of the Bible. Moses was the first prophet to the nation, he collected those. Obviously he must have had source material that went back to Adam because he has all the toledoth in Genesis, so he used previous sources but Moses is said to have been the guy that pulled that together. There probably were editors, later on and I'll show you some evidence of that, where they might have gone in and upgraded, as history went on they put explanatory notes in the text and stuff like that. But those guys are the prophets.

Now if you look at the Prophets, and think about how we normally think of prophecy, what strikes you as odd about the books that they've included as Prophets. Does Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings strike you as prophecy? No, they're history. Well why, then, are history books classified in the Jewish canon as Prophets. This shows you something about prophets. Prophets were men and women who came... there were a few prophetesses but mostly prophets, they came onto the historic scene, they were called unto the historic scene to teach the nation and convict the nation, by lawsuits, of violation of God's laws. And part of that was that they had to bring a case for why they were accusing the nation of disobedience. Now where do you think they built their case from? History and that's why those early books are there, Joshua and Judges, Judges probably was written by Samuel, or the men around Samuel. They were writing those books in order to prove that Yahweh had been successfully faithful to the Law and Israel had violated it. That's the whole book of Judges, remember how it ends, there was no king and everybody did whatever was right in his own eyes. And you know the monotonous story of failure in Judges, over and over and over.

This is why you want to remember this little, I won't call it trivia, but little thing if you do get in discussions, when you're talking to someone and say they're interested in history you might just ask them, who were the first historians, and if they have... you know, they've been educated in history classes they'll probably say oh, it's the Greeks, Thucydides and Herodotus, those are the guys. Well, they lived about 400 BC, the date of Joshua goes back to 1300 BC. So you can then point out, no, the first historians were Israel's prophets, who wrote analyses and Joshua in Judges and 1 and 2 Samuel were really the first history books on this side of the flood. Now the other books are there too, but Moses put them together. And you could say maybe even them, I mean, Exodus is surely history, Genesis is history, Moses as a historian too. But the thing to see is that the prophets were engaged in analyzing history and the reason they were engaged in analyzing history was because revelation is historical. So this ties it together, hopefully, that you won't think of prophets as just forecasting the future. They did that, but that was a result of Israel's transgressions or obedience to Yahweh. It was always the covenants.

So you go through there, and you see Isaiah, you see Jeremiah and Ezekiel, those are the three big guys; those are the three big books that the prophets wrote. And remember, they were preparing the nation for the

fall. They were indicting the nation for its failure prior to the exile. Then you have the Minor Prophets that begin with Hosea, and you have Hosea, Joel and Amos. Someone years ago made a funny way of remembering those three prophets in their sequence; Hosea, think of a hose squirting jelly, Joel, and making a mess, Amos. That gets those three books together. Then you have Obadiah, small little prophet, Jonah, which you normally don't think of that book as a prophet book, but remember, that among the other books starts to show God's working with the Gentile nations around Israel. Then you have Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

But now you have the third section in the Hebrew canon. This is called the Writings. People, and scholars still debate a little bit about what was the criterion the Jewish rabbis used to classify this set of books, because what book do you see in there that you don't expect to see in there? You expect to see it in the Prophets. Daniel, why is Daniel in the Writings and not in the Prophets; surely Daniel was a prophet. Well, the best guess as to what was going on in the minds of the rabbis to classify these books under Writings is that what unifies all these is the Hebrew word for wisdom which is *chokmah*, and wisdom in the Bible, in the Jewish mentality isn't just theoretical wisdom, it's practical wisdom. Think of Proverbs, Proverbs was written to train the leaders of the nation. Proverbs is educational, it's a curriculum, go to the ant, sluggard, and learn the work ethic. And it was using creation's designs to teach people. It was used also to teach argumentation. So let's test that. The book of Psalms, that's musical composition, that's poetry. That was a skill, so that fits as wisdom. Job, surely, was involved in wisdom discussions about the meaning and purpose of life.

You have Proverbs, which we just mentioned, but you notice Ruth is connected to that. So you might say that maybe thought that Ruth ought to be in there because Ruth and Boaz, that whole dialogue there involved wisdom in personal relations, wisdom of a Gentile woman coming into the Jewish family. Then there is the Song of Songs and there you have love and sex depicted, and so again the skill that goes into that. Ecclesiastes, the meditations of Solomon, apparently in his latter days, talking about meaning of life and death. Lamentations, now there's a book by Jeremiah that in our Bibles is closely associated with Jeremiah, the rabbis put it under Writings, probably because it's in poetic form, even that you could argue that so is Isaiah. You have Esther, that's that book that's kind of odd because it doesn't really mention God but it's surely shows the providence of God working in a Gentile culture. You have Daniel and probably what they were thinking about is Daniel shows you the basis of wise living knowing where history is going. And Daniel conducting himself wisely in a pagan/Gentile culture. You have Ezra and Nehemiah there, and 1 and 2 Chronicles which are the later books that closed the canon anyway.

So there's that three fold division, and so now we say Moses, the prophetic line, and wisdom, when you read that in the New Testament, and Jesus talks about the Law and the Prophets and the Writings, now you know what's going on there. The prophets became channels for additional revelation. They were the ones who brought additional revelation to the nation, adding on to what Moses had. So they had very high authority, and not only did they have additional revelation, they preserved some of it in

written books. Now, they wrote a lot of books, we don't have all the books they wrote. For example, the story of the moon standing still and the sun is written in the book of Jasher; well, where's the book of Jasher. Sometimes you see it on the internet or something, some bogus thing but these books are lost books.

There really are a lot of lost books. And to see that, and to see the books that underlie the books that we have, turn to 1 Chronicles 29 and you see this mentioned. And I just show you this because it shows you the activity of these guys. And by the way, prophets were individuals, they could be called from any tribe. It was not an office, they could do their thing and then disappear again. They came from all walks of life, some of them were businessmen, some were what we call businessmen, they were ranchers, there were other men who were in the king's court, they came from all strata of society.

But in 1 Chronicles 29:29 you have this interesting little note, talking about history toward the end, and then it says, the last part of this book, "Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Samuel, the Seer," see, that's what they called the prophet, remember they called them Seers earlier, "written in the book of Samuel the Seer, in the book of Nathan, the prophet," now we don't have any book of Nathan the prophet, "and in the book of Gad, the Seer, [30] with all his reign and his might, and the events that happened to him, in Israel...." So the author of 1 Chronicles was using these prophetic books to write this book. And these books, God did not see fit to preserve; maybe someday in archeology we'll find manuscripts of these things, but they're gone. But they show you that the prophets were deeply concerned to record history. And that's the secret of what made them the world's first historians; they knew that history had purpose and meaning, they knew that history was "His story," so they were interested in it.

I can give you a personal testimony, I could have cared less when I was a non-Christian about history; it was a waste of time, I had to take the courses, so you know, you just learn all the dates and pass the test on Monday and forget, and next week you have another test and you pass it, but when I became a Christian that's when I first got interested in history, because it has meaning, it has purpose. So they were interested in history.

2 Chronicles 9:29 is another one of these little notes that give us.... They are just stimulating little notices that make you wonder about what was going on there. It's talking about Solomon now, and it says, "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nabat?" So he's giving us his source materials, the author of this. The prophets became historians, in other words.

Now to show you the importance of the prophets I want to connect them with the contract that existed between Israel and God. And I've said this over and over and over, and this is a thing again to throw into a conversation. There was only one nation in human history that ever had a contract with God, and that is Israel. The second thing about Israel that we go over

again and again is that no other religion ever had a chain of prophets that lasted for centuries, that were coherent.

And to show you more evidence of this, here's Yehekel Kaufmann, who is one of the historians of Israel, he's Jewish obviously, and he has written, years ago he wrote a key book called *The Religion of Israel*. And in this he says: "What makes the history of Israelite prophecy sui generis, that means something of itself, unique category, "is the succession of apostles of God that come to the people through the ages. Such a line..." "...a line of apostle-prophets is unknown to paganism." This is unique, this is not true of all other religions, people say oh, religion is all the same. They are not all the same, here is an objective standard that you can point to. "Not even those great souls that rose among the nations to found religions and teach the good way, [e.g. Buddha, Zoroaster] are of a type with the prophets of Israel....paganism does not know of a continuous, generations-long succession of prophets." That is a fact, objective fact of history. And people have to come to terms, why? Why is this?

And so that's why I have that little box on your notes there, after I give you that quote and I give you the page and the book, [*The Religion of Israel*, p 212f] in case you ever want to check that out. In the box a little principle, and that is: In dealing with religious cults like Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Christian Science-which all claim "continuity" with the Bible, you need to use the argument of prophetic lineage: are they claiming that their originators, that their founders, stand in the line of prophets. If they do stand in the line of prophets they must pass the test that we're going to get to, it refers to here. And you'll find they flunk the test. So it's a test to show that these claims don't fit, they don't stand in the historic prophetic line.

Now let's go to Deuteronomy 18:15 and we'll see God raising up a prophet and then the controls for that. In this thing he says, "[The LORD your] God will raise up, it shows you the nation did not pick the prophets; the prophets were picked by God and God raised them up. The nation couldn't bring up a prophet and I'll show you evidence of that in a moment. So, "The LORD [your God] will raise up [for you a Prophet] like me from your midst," so Moses becomes the key prophet, but there's a nuance to this, because in Deuteronomy 34:10, it's not necessary to go there, but that's a reference that says that as of the time that the book of Deuteronomy was finally finished and published and apparently... in fact, why don't we turn to Deuteronomy 34:10 because here's another instance where Deuteronomy was evidently edited, updated in other words, by a prophet, we don't know which prophet but the prophets did this sort of thing.

But in verse 10 there's a little notice after the death of Moses, and it says, "Since then," obviously this is after Moses, "Since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, [11] in all the signs and wonders which the LORD" did and so on and so forth. In other words, Moses was unique. Well, the other prophets did neat things but in Israel's history they were looking for a real prophet that would be a second Moses. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and these guys, they were all prophets, legitimately, but in the Jewish mind they didn't really have the grandeur of Moses. And that's why the Gospels begin, I give you John 1 and Acts 3 there where they are looking for THE prophet,

meaning the Messianic prophet. And Jesus, of course, is going to fulfill the typology of Moses, He becomes the Greater Moses. And that's why John in his Gospel starts out, so and so came by, the Law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus; he's deliberately using this prophetic profile.

Now it says you will hear Him, now it explains in verse 16 why there had to be prophets. What God does here, through Moses, is He recorded, and He repeats what Israel as a nation said at the foot of Mount Sinai. Remember they were scared; remember God said if anybody comes up here except Moses I'm going to kill them, now you just back off, this is a holy God manifesting Himself and only I will allow people into My sacred space, and if you come up you're going to get killed so just stay out of here. So Moses alone came up. So Israel saw all this, the fire, the smoke, and they hear this echoing words in Hebrew of the Ten Words and it was scary. And so they said, [16] "according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying," you said, here's a quote, "'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'" So this was a plea by the nation, look, this is so scary, this is so terrifying to us we can't take it, we cannot take a Theophany. We can't stand this any more. So we say let there be a spokesman that goes into the presence of God and brings back the word. That request led to the creation of the line of prophets; clearly that's what this text is saying.

[17] "And the Lord said to me: 'What they have spoken is good.'" So now it says, [18] "I will raise up for them a Prophet," so that's the historic basis of why this office was created. And he says I'm going to raise this all up, and He shall speak with them, "and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command Him." Now there you have the verbal revelation of God. "I will put My words into his mouth. It doesn't talk about just ideas, it means words, it means conveying information. That's why we are so dogmatic that revelation in the Bible means information transferred from God's mind to man's mind. If a person doesn't believe that there's no use in discussing the rest of the Bible. There really isn't, you're just chasing your tail in a conversation; focus on the fact, is there a God who speaks; do you believe it. that is core because if you can't get beyond that the gospel is meaningless to them. There's no sin issue, there's nothing to separate me from God.

And so to further verify we have this commentary, one of the outstanding commentaries by S.R. Driver, many, many years ago S. R. Driver was one of the leading Hebrew experts and did a very critical commentary, International Critical Commentary; "The existence of such an order in Israel, forming a permanent channel of revelation was, of course, a signal mark of distinction between Israel and the other nations of antiquity." So it's not Kaufmann pointing this out, scholars that really know what they're talking about have observed this; this is probably almost a hundred year old quote here. So it's not something Charlie Clough thought of Monday night. This is something that is inherently a feature of Israel's history.

Now this language thing, if you look on your notes, where I have "put My words in His mouth," there's a tendency to think that language on a page like we have in our Bibles is insufficient to really communicate what God wants to communicate. That's because 20th century language theory thinks

of language as so insufficient. Language in the modern way of thinking is just an animal thing that casually developed in a Neo-Darwinian style out of our chimpanzee past, and so it turns from grunts to words. Of course, listening to some of the teenagers today you think it's going back to grunts. But the point is that language is demeaned, it's really demeaned in the modern mentality. And the reason is because of evolutionary origin. But if the Bible is correct, see, if the Bible is correct, you start there, how did God create the universe? With language. Therefore, is there any surprise that when you look at the DNA we have four letters in the DNA code, and your life and my life, every detail of our body is embedded in that code, four letter alphabet; God did not need 24 letters, He needed only 4 and He built all of us with four letters.

So language is all around us and this is not... but what I have in the notes there is, here's the kind of thinking: (1) "If Jesus would just come to me in a vision, things would be so much clearer," and the answer is no they wouldn't. He's coming in visions, I believe, to many of the Muslims; there's so many records of Muslims... but Jesus, in those visions is not preaching the gospel and He's not adding revelation, it's just some go meet so and so Christian. He's deferring to us in the body of Christ. There's no extra revelation going on because all the revelation that is available is already there in the book we hold. Or, "We need prophets today to tell us what to do." No, Ephesians 2:20 says it has been laid, past tense, on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. That means that when Paul wrote Ephesians he was declaring the end of revelation; the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Hebrews 2 is another example showing this.

Then it says in verse 19, and here's the final end of this story here, if indeed the prophets are so important, if that really is the case, then they carry revelation as God Himself would be on scene speaking. If that is the case, what is revelation? It is personal and requires a response. So that's verse 19. It says, "And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him." And that means that people are held, all of us, are held accountable to our exposure of the Word of God.

And then it says, [20] "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 prophet shall die]," oh-oh, now we have a capital crime committed. The reason for the seriousness of the judgment of capital crime is because of the seriousness of the prophetic office. The prophet had authority over the king. Think of Nathan walking into David and convicting David. Can you imagine from what you know of history, can you imagine any other country with a monarchy where a lay person would go up and say something like that to the king. It's unheard of. You wouldn't be doing that to the Pharaoh, you wouldn't be doing that to the King of Mesopotamia, that happens in Israel, and it happens in Israel only because even the king knew that when that prophet says something I'd better listen. The kings were taught that; that's limited government power, the civil servants, the civil office was underneath the prophet because the prophet was the revelator authority over the government. If that's the case, you can't afford to have a phony, and therefore anyone who would dare assume authority, the highest authority in the nation, and be a counterfeit, that's a capital offence.

And finally the text concludes with the rule of evidence. If it's a capital crime, how is the court going to decide whether this guy is a phony or not. So the Scriptures give us the test, and again, on your outline I've called the empirical test. The empirical test means it is based on evidence, it is based on some objective evidence and the objective evidence is given here. It says if he has spoken something and it does not come to pass, then God hasn't spoken it. 100% accuracy, not 99%, when I taught this series 30 years ago Jeanne Dixon was running around the nation, writing some book on prophecy and so on and she was... all the radios had it and the articles in the papers, oh Jeanne Dixon, she's a prophetess, and better get her book, go down and buy it because she's going to tell you all about the future. Well, some of her (quote) "prophecies" (unquote) happened but some of them didn't. Well, Jeanne Dixon would have been killed, to make a prophetic claim and have your prophecies fail was to indict yourself.

[21] And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'-- [22] when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."]

So that's the empirical test, that a prophecy would fail, and the rational test we already covered in Deuteronomy 13 and that is the teaching, the doctrine of the prophet had to be Mosaic. So you had two tests, the rational and the empirical. So that shows you the Jewish people weren't some mystical guys that just sort of went by the feeling in the seat of their pants. They thought things through, they were critical thinkers, they had rational tests and empirical tests.

Now the last thing to do, I want to show you why, in the last section here, Israel knew very well when they didn't have a prophet. So I don't know, we can't go back in a time machine, maybe in heaven we'll get a chance to ask these guys, what I would like to know, how they really knew when they didn't have a prophet. And so I've given you three quotes from an Apocrypha book called 1 Maccabees; if you have a Catholic friend in the Roman Catholic Church they have this in the Bible; we don't, as Protestants, believe its inspired Scripture but it's a historical source material we use for word studies and so on.

It's a very famous story about the Maccabean revolt, this is when the forerunner of the antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes, comes walking into Palestine demanding that the Jews get global in their culture, that they have to stop being these obscure fundamentalist Jews. We want you to join the ecumenical movement, and so therefore to make his point he said that your athletes will compete in the Olympics naked, which the Jewish boys would not do, and we're going to sacrifice pigs on your altar, which was an unclean animal. And he did these kind of things, finally they had... and it's an exciting story of Julius Maccabeus who leads the revolt and he kills the king's soldiers that come to this town and it starts a big revolt. But in the middle of this Maccabean war we have this statement.

1 Maccabees 4:42-46, "He [Judas Maccabeus after the conquest of the Temple Mount]," so he's conquered now, he's conquered the Temple Mount and

they've got a problem What are we going to do with the stones that we've had to slaughter a pig on, that we desecrated it, what do we do with that? And so they needed an answer. Look at how they handled this. He "chose blameless priests devoted to the Law, and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place. They deliberated what to do about the altar of burnt offerings which had been profaned. And they thought it best to tear it down lest it be a reproach upon them for the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until there should come a prophet to tell them what to do with them." Now there's an example; they obviously are conscious of the fact that they need a prophet and they're hesitant to say well, God led me to do this; they were honest enough to say no, God did not lead me, I can pray here but God has not shown me what to do with the stones. So that's what they did.

Here's another example, 1 Maccabees 9:27, "After the death of Judas, the lawless emerged in all parts of Israel They sought and they searched for the friends of Judas, and brought them to Bacchides, and he took vengeance on them," this is after he died and all his sons were massacred in retaliation for what they had done in the Maccabean Revolt. "Thus there was a great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time the prophets ceased to appear among them." So they're very conscious that what was going on in the Old Testament had stopped, they were in a period of the age of silence. These three quotes show you they were conscious of the difference between a prophetic word and a normal every day human conversation.

1 Maccabees 14:41, "And the Jews and their priests decided that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise, and that he should be governor over them." So in lieu of a prophet they're having this guy, but they recognize that he's a priest but he's not a prophet.

So the bottom line here tonight is that this office of prophet that's going on is considered to be exalted, it's a following of Moses. And we know, as Christians, thank God for the prophets because that's what gave us this, this was written by these men, many of whom we'll meet in heaven but we have at least some of the names, Samuel we'll see one day, Nathan we'll see, maybe he can tell us what went on when he had to go before the king. Or maybe they will tell us what it was like when they got did the Word of God, did they hear it audibly, did they see it in a vision, how did the Word of God come. Ask Isaiah what that was that he saw up in heaven, "And I saw the throne of God Himself," what was that like Isaiah?

So we conclude, the line of prophets was the spiritual "life" of the nation. It was unique among the nations of human history. It presupposed the doctrine of revelation, it doesn't make sense without it. It both explained and met the empirical and rational tests. We won't belabor the point but you've seen this before, the idea that you have God, man and nature; God knows comprehensively man, God knows nature. We know a little bit about nature and we know a little bit about God. And we have these two truth tests, the consistency test is the rational test, like Deuteronomy 13, man's thoughts can be orderly because God's plan is orderly. The prophets are orderly, their teaching rationally fits, the cults don't fit

what the prophets have spoken, there's always a clash between the cults and the genuine line of prophets.

And then there's the correspondence with the empirical, man's ideas can correspond with factual reality outside his head because both are part of a unified creation. So whatever the prophet said it came to pass; that's because God is the Creator of both. He's the Lord of history, He does His "show" and He's also the Lord of revelation, verbal revelation and He also "tells," He shows and He tells. And that answers the metaphysical question, it answers the epistemological question.

Tonight you have seen the office unique to Israel and the Bible, and that is why we can say all unbelievers, every single unbeliever, regardless of how many PhD's he has, has no answer to the basic two questions, the metaphysical question, what is the purpose and meaning of life. All you every get if you ask somebody that is a guess but you can go to the Word of God, presuming it is the Word of God, and know what the meaning of it is because He tells you and He tells you where it's going and He tells you His responsibility, No other person outside of Scripture can ever answer that question.

The second one, how do I recognize truth? It's because tonight we've seen, it fits together. There's a rational test and there's an empirical test.