

# (The Names of Jesus) 7. Christ our Prophet

by A.B. Simpson

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## Transcript

“A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall you hear.” (Acts 7: 37.) The Hebrew prophets were the noblest class of men in ancient Israel. The priests were not always pure and true to God, for even the sons of Aaron brought dishonor upon themselves in the first generation; and the kings with few exceptions were unfaithful and unholy in the influence of their lives. The very best of them, David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, were marked by the strongest imperfections, and many of them were blots upon the history of their country. But the prophets of Israel were always true, from Moses, the first glorious leader and teacher of God’s inheritance, to John the Baptist, who closed the ancient dispensation and ushered in the new. They were all types of the great Prophet, whom Stephen announced as their divine successor, and the great apostle and prophet of our profession, Jesus Christ. Let us look at His prophetic office as it is illustrated by their functions and their lives.

### The Functions of our Great Prophet

1. In general, the ancient prophet was the messenger of God to the people and the representative of His will concerning them. So Jesus Christ to us is the messenger of Jehovah, the Word of God, the voice of divine authority and divine love, who brings to us God’s will, and reveals to us His plan of salvation and life.
2. More particularly He is our Teacher, leading us into all truth and building us up in our faith and life. It is He who gives us the first ray of light that dawns upon the darkness of the natural heart. It is He who shows to us ourselves and Himself, and enables us to trust Him as our Savior. It is He who opens our inner eyes to see the light that streams from heaven through the Word. It is He who shows to us the deeper truths of the Christ life; Himself as our Sanctifier, our Life, our Healer, our help in every time of need. It is He, who as fast as we believe, enlarges our vision, our hope, our desire, our knowledge, our faith, and shows us the King in His beauty, and the land that is afar off. It is He who anoints our eyes with salve that we may see, and then opens to us the light which we are able to receive. It is He who makes the truth not only light but life, and enables us to appropriate it, to believe it, to feed upon it, to be strengthened, quickened and sanctified by it. He is our wonderful Counselor, our unerring Teacher, our Faithful Prophet.
3. As our Prophet He guides us in perplexity and shows us the way we should go. He not only gives us truth, but light upon our path. “He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” The ancient prophets were the counselors of the king and the nations in hours of perplexity. Nathan came to David with the Lord’s word concerning his important acts. Elisha was the counselor of

the king. Samuel was the guide of Israel. Jesus is our leader and guide. When He puts us forth, He goes before us, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. He will not let us err. He will lead us in a straight way, wherein we shall not stumble, and He will stay with us nearest of all in the dark perplexities and crises of life.

4. As our Prophet He unfolds the vision of the future, showing us His plan concerning the world and the church, especially His own personal coming, preparing us to work for Him in intelligent hope and cooperation, and showing us as much of His plan for His own life as we need to know to inspire us with courage and enable us to meet with intelligence the duties and claims of life. He whispers to our hearts the assurance of His answer to our prayers, leads out our new hopes in holy aspirations for service and blessing, and gives us glimpses of the great and mighty things He would have us aspire to and expect from Him.

5. As our Prophet He is the great wonder worker, for the prophet of old not only brought the message of God, but accredited it by signs and wonders, proving by their supernatural working that their message was indeed divine. So our Lord Jesus Christ, our own dear Prophet, brings us not only words, but deeds, fulfills what He commands, and ever seals His message to us by His own omnipotent and blessed working.

#### Illustrations of Christ's Prophetic Work

1. In Moses we behold the first type of our great Prophet. Born of the oppressed race, he was one of them and could come near to their hearts in deepest sympathy. So Christ is a brother born of our flesh and blood, and further, a brother born for adversity. He was the revealer of God's purpose of deliverance and redemption to them, and he led them out of Egypt into their covenant with Jehovah. So Christ reveals to us the great redemption and leads us into it. He was the revealer to them of the law of God and the gospel, as unfolded in the wondrous tabernacle and types; and so Jesus Christ is our teacher, not only of moral and spiritual truth, but especially of salvation, that glorious salvation of which the ancient tabernacle was the wondrous type.

Above all else, he was their devoted, faithful and unwavering friend, utterly true to their interests amid the great discouragement and provocation, and never failing them even when they failed him and proved wholly unfaithful to their God. How often they disappointed him and provoked their God, but never once did he falter in his faithful love. How often did they speak against Moses and Jehovah, murmuring in the wilderness, but he ever met them with new light and deliverance. And even when Jehovah seemed for a moment about to reject them and offered Moses a new inheritance of his own if he would give them up, Moses refused, and offered himself a sacrifice for the people he loved, crying, "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray, out of Your book."

Again, when a more terrible crisis came, and they refused to enter the land of promise, and were driven back into the wilderness for forty years to perish in their unbelief, Moses did not leave them, but went back with them every step of the way, clinging to his unworthy children with more than a mother's love, until once more he brought them to the borders of their inheritance which he lost through their provocation.

Beautiful type of the more gracious, tender, faithful Prophet whom we follow! How often we grieve Him, and how faithfully He loves us and keeps us, "for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you," until He shall have accomplished all His gracious will for all of us! More than the love of Moses is the love of Jesus! How we have proved that love already! We can trust it still, for He has said, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither

shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the LORD that has mercy on you.â€■

2. Shall we look at Samuel, the great reformer, the prophet of Israelâ€™s return to God from the dark and long apostasy under the judges, when for four hundred years the light of Godâ€™s covenant presence was almost extinguished. He was the prophet who established the whole school of Hebrew prophets, and so shaped and formed out of the chaos of sin and wretchedness amid which he was born, the elements of unity, strength and stability in the kingdom of David, which he left as his heritage to Israel, and which were far more the work of his life than even of Davidâ€™s own faith and fidelity to God. Samuel, the faithful friend of weak and inconstant Israel, expressed his noble spirit in the words which he said to them on one occasion, â€œGod forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.â€■

Samuel was the type of Jesus, the prophet of the poor backslider, the Christ that restored Peter and Thomas, and still tenderly and faithfully awaits to welcome back the wanderer to His bosom again. How tenderly He loves the contrite heart! How graciously He restores the child! How sweetly He forgives! How mightily He keeps! How faithfully He loves! How perfectly He heals our backslidings, and becomes the dew upon Israel, revives us as the corn, causes us to grow as the vine, and our scent as Lebanon. He leads us on and up until we are established, strengthened, built up, and settled, and become like Israel of old, His own royal kingdom and throne.

3. Elijah tells us of the great prophet of reproof and correction, the loving teacher who has sometimes to show us our faults and to chasten us for them in tender love. Elijah was the faithful reprover of sin, and represented the judicial element in God. So our great Prophet has often to correct His people and show them their faults and lead them from the error of their ways by His heart-searching discipline. But He is a better reprover than Elijah; for there is no better evidence than the life of Elijah himself of the failure of even that greatest of prophets, and the tender faithfulness of the true Prophet who dealt with him as He does with us. Would we see the true spirit of Jesus our Prophet? Let us look at the God of Elijah, as the poor broken prophet lies under the juniper tree, a fugitive and a failure after the highest triumph of his glorious life. How gently God deals with him! He first rests him with sleep, and then feeds him by angel hands, then sends him alone to Horeb, and asks him, â€œWhat are you doing here, Elijah?â€■ True He speaks with the earthquake, the whirlwind and the fire, but He ends with the still, small voice. The last message is a restoration of his commission and a renewal of his call to service as He sends him forth to anoint Jehu, Hazael and Elisha for the work that yet remains to be done. So gently yet faithfully does our dear Prophet teach us; not crushing the spirit that would fail before Him or the souls that He has made, but tenderly leading us into all His light, and then making the very best of us, notwithstanding our worst failures. Let us never doubt our faithful Christ, our wonderful Counselor, our mighty God, our everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace.

4. The most beautiful prophetic life of the Old Testament was that of Elisha, and he is a perfect type of Jesus Christ, our Prophet. Elijah represented the law; Elisha, the gospel; Elijah, the discipline of judgment; Elisha, the salvation of grace. Elijah was the thunderbolt and lightning; Elisha, the sunshine and light. Elijah was the woodmanâ€™s axe and fire; Elisha, the husbandman with his seed and watering pot, with fields of green and harvests of golden grain.

Elishaâ€™s is the ministry of love â€” the ministry of Jesus. He begins by healing the barren land and the water by sprinkling salt in its fountains. He was like the great Prophet who does not blame the outflowing of our lives so much, but rather goes to the fountainhead and heals the source of our thoughts, motives

and actions by the touch of His mighty love.

Look at him again as he meets the baffled kings of Judah, Israel and Edom in the valley of death and famine; and instead of blaming them for their mistake, he gently interposes for their deliverance, commands the valley to be filled with ditches, claims from heaven the floods of water to fill all the mighty spaces and overflow in blessing for the perishing armies. So our great Prophet comes to us in the calamities that we have brought upon ourselves, and delivers us, and then gently leads us to greater blessings.

Look at him again as the poor widow appeals to him for help against the creditors who are about to seize upon her sons for her debts. "What do you have in the house?" is all he asks, and then commands the pot of oil to be brought forth and poured into all the empty vessels she can find or borrow, until they are filled to overflowing, and she is rich with a harvest of faith; and then he bids her sell the oil, pay her debts, and live upon the rest. So our great Prophet meets us in every emergency by showing us that we have within our house the one remedy for everything that tries us. The little pot of oil, the Holy Spirit, so faint it may be in His manifested presence that it seems less than the little finger of our hand; but that is the little finger of God, and back of it lies all His omnipotence, wisdom and love. All we have to do is to take that Holy Spirit and pour it into every vessel of need, both for ourselves and others, and see the vessels overflow and the blessings only cease when we cease to make room and to pour out.

Look at him again as the sons of the prophet lose their borrowed axe in the river Jordan where they had been cutting wood for their house, and the axe had slipped from the handle to the bottom of the river. Instantly he orders a branch or handle to be dropped into the river, and immediately the axe rises to the surface, and the lost implement is recovered by the hands of the young men. So our great Prophet is equal to the smallest as well as the largest emergencies. We, too, lose our axe sometimes "our power for service, our victory over temptation, our peace and joy, our consciousness of Christ's presence; but there is a piece of wood "the pilgrim's staff, the sacred promise "that we can ever find equal to the emergency, and, as we cast it into the water, our blessing will rise to meet it, our lost axe will come back to us. The very laws of nature may be suspended, the iron can swim again, the thing that was heavier than lead can rise with buoyant wings, the heavy heart can mount above and sing and trust with new power and victory, and we can praise Him whose faithful love has turned darkness into day and sorrow into joy.

Or look again at his triumph over his enemies. The armies of Syria surround him and his servant, and the servant gives a cry of despair, "Alas! my master," as he sees no possible way of escape. All that Elisha asks is that the eyes of his servant may be opened, and see on the mountain round about there are armies of angelic horses and chariots and soldiers, and instantly their fears are calmed, and they know that all is well. So, beloved, our great Prophet can show us, though every avenue of escape be shut off, that there is ever an upper way that carries us above our foes, and a superior host that has the advantage of position over all our foes. But that is not all. He then asks the Lord to blind the soldiers, and so he goes down to them without a fear, and leads them all the way to the city of Samaria. It is indeed a triumph as amusing as it is sublime. When they reach the city the king is so delighted to have his enemies in his power that he wants to slay them. Elisha treats the proposal as absurd, and orders that a magnificent banquet be prepared for them; and so they feed them and feast them until the men are astounded, paralyzed with wonder and dismay at the treatment they have received, and when all is over, they are sent back to their own land to tell how easily the prophet of Israel has defeated them without a blow, except from the hand of love. We need hardly wonder when it is added that the bands of the Syrians came no

more unto the land of Israel. And so our great Prophet teaches us to triumph over our foes by the weapons of heavenly love, that the surest way to kill our enemies is by kindness, to consume them by the coals of fire of loving deeds, words and recompenses.

Such is the great and gracious Prophet who is willing to walk by our side, who is willing to dwell in our heart of hearts, to be our wisdom, our guide. Happy they that walk in His fellowship and in His love! For them no emergency can be extreme, no situation can be desperate, no adversary can be formidable. No purpose formed from above can fail. Blessed Prophet, You are ours! Help us to abide in You and follow You evermore!

5. Isaiah, the prophet of high and holy teaching, is the type of Him who leads us into the high and loftiest heights of heavenly truth and life, where the seraphim veil their faces and feet with their wings, and exclaim, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory"; where faith mounts up on high to see "the king in his beauty: and the land that is very far off"; where peace nestles under the shadow of the Rock of Ages; where hope looks out upon His coming, and sings, "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." "Your sun shall no more go down; neither shall your moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended." Holy service waits His power and bidding, and exclaims, "He awakens me morning by morning, as one that has been instructed that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary"; or, going forth to do His bidding, sings, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that says unto Zion, Your God reigns!" Prayer reaches out in the name of Jesus, with mighty faith, and obeys the great injunction, "Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command me." Holy gladness lifts up its voice and sings, "Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation. . . . Cry out and shout, you inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of you." So still our Prophet speaks to us, teaches us and leads us as we abide in Him.

6. Daniel, the prophet of the future, is the type of Him who unfolds to us the vision of His coming and as much of His will for us as it is best for us to know or hope for, for Jesus also shows to us the things to come, and leads us into the life of hope as well as of faith and love.

Such is our glorious Prophet. Is He not dearer to us today? Shall we not trust Him more fully, follow Him more closely, listen to Him more lovingly and obediently, and seek to send abroad His glorious truth among all nations, until the Prophet and the Priest shall have become the King of kings and reign from shore to shore.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ab-simpson/the-names-of-jesus-7-christ-our-prophet/>

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