

A Prophet Like Unto Me

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Table of Contents

1. A Prophet Like Unto Me	2
2. The Seed of David	4
3. The Old Testament Promise of the Spirit	6
4. The New Covenant	8
5. The Unhewn Stone	10

1

A Prophet Like Unto Me

One of the reasons why we have churches and why we go to church at all is to find out how a man can get help from God. We all realize that the Christian gospel announces that man *needs* help. In fact he must be helped if he is going to be able to live successfully. The gospel also gives us this wonderful truth that man can be helped. We remember a passage in Scripture that says, "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." The Bible tells us that the One who made us, the One who keeps us, the One who judges us is God. He can help us and will help us because of His grace. This help that comes from God comes in response to faith. The Bible tells us in various places, "According to your faith be it unto you."

I am going to raise the question with you, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Someone is going to have to tell them; in order to believe, they must hear. How can they believe unless they have heard? But how can a man hear? How can a human being hear the voice of God or the word of God? Does it happen that God just speaks to men? Is that the way people become Christians? Are they out walking on the streets and God speaks to them? Or are they walking in the woods and God speaks to them? Now, mind you, I am not saying that could not happen. And I verily do believe that every now and again there are individuals who have a personal, direct message from God. But is that the usual way in which men become Christians – that God calls their name out or speaks to them in the nighttime? Do you think that's the way it is? This did happen in Old Testament times and in the New Testament too. God did communicate directly with certain persons whom the Bible calls prophets. We speak of Isaiah the prophet, Elijah the prophet, Jeremiah the prophet, and Moses was a prophet. These men are also spoken of on occasion as holy men. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son."

Now such a man was Moses. He was a man called of God to lead the people from the land of Egypt into the land of Canaan and he was their leader. This leading was done in various ways and among other things was the leading of their minds and their hearts. Moses told the people what to believe about God. He told them what God would do. Moses spoke to the people and they looked to him to find out about these things. For instance, in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 5, verse 27, the people called on Moses to go and be their spokesman, and this is the word that they spoke to him, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it." The people said that they were afraid to go into the presence of God. They might do something that would cause them to be destroyed. They asked Moses to find out from God what the message was and then come and speak it to them. This is the function of a prophet, a man who comes to know the truth of God from God and then who speaks it to other people.

When Moses was preaching to the people and leading them he would tell them over and over again that God is, and that God is a "rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He brought in the very name of the LORD to them and possibly used a word something like *Yahweh*. That would mean that God is, and will be, and has been. He is always being. The big thing he brought out to them was that eternally and everlastingly and always in a living way, God *is*. Another thing that Moses would have conveyed to the people for them to believe was that God *can* bless, and he assured them God *would* bless. Moses also brought to them God's law. He went up on Mt. Sinai and brought down the Ten Commandments and taught them to the people. Thereby he taught them the Word of God. The Ten Commandments are the Law of God with reference to the requirements that God makes of man. Those Ten Commandments, like anything that comes directly from God, require obedience.

Furthermore, Moses, knowing that the people would possibly fail to obey, also brought from God other information. He brought from God the idea that sin, the transgression of the law, brings judgment; for God will not hold a man guiltless who breaks His law. This was always something that Moses was teaching the people. It was not a matter of what they could get away with. It was not even a matter of what they thought about the fact that God was a living being and that they were having dealings with Him. He was going to dwell in the midst of them. He would be right in the camp; and if there was any man at all who broke the law of God, that man would suffer from God Himself. More than this was revealed. In the structure of the tabernacle Moses revealed to the Children of Israel that God will allow a sinner to come and confess his sins and be forgiven. There was a way in which a man who had done wrong could come to God and by admitting that he had done wrong, throw himself on the mercy of God, and actually receive from God forgiveness and clearance. In other words, sins could be forgiven.

Moses also impressed upon them that God was going to live in their midst. He had ways of picturing this great truth before them. That meant they had to conduct themselves in a way that was acceptable. For that reason Moses brought out laws of conduct about how they were to do, because if God was going to be in their midst, they had to do right. He spelled out for them what right would be. Also, he brought out the idea that they should be clean. He spent a great deal of time in stressing their cleanliness. Some of the cases of cleanliness were just a matter of hygiene. Some of the instances of cleanliness were matters of refinement. And some were matters of ceremony. The whole idea was that their conduct should be under discipline. They should be careful what they did and careful how they acted because God would dwell in the midst of them.

Moses, speaking as a prophet, made a prediction that we remember to this day, "The Lord thy God will raise unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." We understand this to be a prediction of the coming of the Messiah, the Christ. There would be One coming from God, who would come from among the people, and He would be anointed of God for this task. His business would be to reveal to the people the will of God and the people were to listen to Him. Human beings do not know the will of God. Human beings cannot always figure out what would be the right thing, how they should act and what they should do. Someone must tell them, and these persons are chosen of God. They are the prophets. Of all the different persons who would come into this world to tell me what God wants, the One who came perfectly and told exactly, who understood because He was God Himself, was the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ will teach you about God. He will show you that God is and that God is a "rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He will teach that God receives sinners. You can go through the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and you will not see one time that He ever turned away from a sinner who came for help. Any sinner can come to God because any sinner can come to the Lord Jesus Christ. You will also find out that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself did everything the Father wanted Him to do. Whatever the Father would do that is what the Lord Jesus wanted to do. By that He set an example for us. He was a Prophet teaching us about God.

The Lord Jesus in inviting us to come to Him is giving the invitation of God. When He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," that is what God says. When the Lord Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart," He is God speaking. That is the way God speaks to my heart. The Lord Jesus in His own life showed that what is acceptable to the Father is perfect obedience, and He did obey. He shows me that He did this for me and then helps me that I too might be acceptable in the sight of God by trusting in Him. How much have you learned about God by seeing Jesus Christ? That is why He came – that we should learn about God and put our trust in Him.

The Seed Of David

Have you ever realized how much we depend on the traffic policemen in our daily life? What do you think it would be like to go downtown if we did not have any control of traffic? The whole of our life is just like that. We realize more and more how complicated things can be. There is always so much more to be done than we can do. One of our problems is we can just be in one place at one time. That's bad enough but what helps to make it worse is that there are other people in the world too. People are going in opposite directions and wanting to do the same thing at the same time. One of the difficulties of this world is that you just can't put two people in the same place at the same time. Two people cannot go through a door at the same time. This creates a general confusion of conflict. Sometimes we are in conflict with people because we all need the same things. Then I have interests. I want to go this way and that way. I want to go out and enjoy a game; I want to go home and work. Which one of these things am I going to do? I suppose on any given night in the week you could have gone two or three different places. One of your problems is that you cannot go and cannot stay at the same time. You cannot go out; you cannot do your work at home; you cannot rest all at the same time. It creates a confusion and because there is so much confusion and such a welter of conflict all about us, there must be some directing center of control.

For instance, if you take a number of children and turn them loose on a school playground, you might think all they need is just a ground to play in. No, they need more than that. If you turn those children loose from day to day on that playground without anyone there to direct them or to control them, you will have confusion, trouble, disturbance and all kinds of unhappiness. So we have a playground director. Everyone of us knows how interested we can get in a baseball game, but there would not be a baseball game if you didn't have an umpire. You wouldn't have a football game if you did not have officials. You need a referee; you need a lineman; you need a judge of play. Workmen putting up a new apartment building would not get anything done if they didn't have foremen to tell them what to do. Perhaps today you will go shopping in one of the supermarkets or you will go downtown and shop in those big stores. You see everything there in place. There are the counters with the rows of merchandise and the price tags on them. Over it all is a manager. In terms of our military forces, the hundreds of airplanes we have would be practically useless if we didn't have an officer in command. It takes someone in charge. This is a common thing and I am talking about it because so much of our rest and peace is involved in it. Let me put it to you very simply. Have you ever been in such a situation where your house is all in confusion? You can't find things. There are things where they ought not to be. Will you agree with me that this kind of situation can leave a person all tired out and unhappy? What do you need to do? You need to bring in some order. Things need to be put in their place. They need to be cleaned up. If you have three, four, five or six people living in one house at one time, you are going to have some kind of order arranged. That's what I am talking about. We need some sort of direction, some sort of control that will watch over us and keep us in the way that we should go.

In the Old Testament this was done by a king. The king is something like a supervisor who directs and controls. He is like a bandleader or a choir director. The Old Testament idea of the king is most dramatically demonstrated in David. God gave David a covenant, a promise, in which He told him one of his seed would sit on the throne forever and all the nations of the world would come to Him. Everybody would come and bow down to Him. He would bring order out of chaos. would bring order out of confusion, would bring peace out of strife. They would have one person who would rule and would manage and would direct them in their personal affairs. This King would be descended from David.

In the genealogy of Jesus Christ, in the Bible, He is spoken of as the seed of David. He is the One

who is coming in the name of David to rule. He is presented as the fulfillment of the promise that God made to David. Jesus of Nazareth, who is of the seed of David, is the one who is to sit on the throne forever. This Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in Bethlehem, was actually born King. The wise men said, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?"

A common phrase in the Bible is "the kingdom of God;" sometimes it is spoken of as "the kingdom of heaven." In thinking of the kingdom of God, we should think of a certain relationship with God in which men obey Him. Citizens of this kingdom obey God's will. When we are obedient to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ we let Him rule over us. We let the Lord Jesus Christ be the traffic cop in our affairs. He directs me. We let Him be the Playground Director in our activities, the Umpire of our souls, the Referee in all that we do. We let Him be the Foreman, the Director in our activity, the Manager of our lives. He is the King. He is in control.

Now this kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ is very real for a Christian. When we become a Christian we receive Him as our Lord and Master. In this sense, He fills the function of the seed of David for us. No man is on his own. The whole truth of the matter is that there isn't anybody who can do as he pleases. "No man can serve two masters . . . Ye cannot serve both God and mammon." He will either hate the one and despise the other or he will cling to the one and he will push away the other one. We cannot go both ways at the same time. In other words, if I am going to obey the Lord, then the real truth of the matter is I don't get to obey myself, and I don't do what other people want me to do. I do what the Lord wants me to do. This is the will of God. When He sent the Lord Jesus into the world He sent Him to be "a governor that shall rule my people Israel." This comes out in a very famous saying that we have many times quoted, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is a wonderful thing. Notice the next sentence. It opens this up to you. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The Lord Jesus Christ gives Himself to guide me and to direct me, and I am to have fellowship with Him as I obey Him. I am to come to Him, yield myself to Him, take His yoke upon me and learn of Him. He will give me a way of doing things. Does He have control of your life? Are you really doing what the Lord wants you to do? Your future would be a whole lot better if you just close the ranks with the Lord and step over right close to the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything He wants you to do, you do it. As the seed of David, He is the one divinely appointed to be King. The Lord God wants us to have direction. He wants us to be guided. The one Person He gave to guide us is the living Lord Jesus Christ. When you believe in Him, and His Holy Spirit works in your heart, He will help you to walk in His ways and in His will.

The Old Testament Promise of the Spirit

Any time we see a Christian, one of the things we are sure will be true about him is that he freely will be wanting to do God's will. Any time we see a person who has learned to know the Lord Jesus Christ and is looking to and trusting in God, we will see a person who really wants to be well pleasing to God. Of course there is a problem of knowing what to do. Even Christians sometimes will have to wonder what the Lord would have them to do about this or that.

The other day we noticed how the Lord Jesus would come into this world to be a Prophet like Moses to show the people what God wanted them to do. Whenever we say that the Lord Jesus will teach us something, we should have in mind that He is the Incarnate Word of God. The Bible is the written Word of God. Anything that is in the Bible is what the Lord Jesus Christ would teach. Anything that the Lord Jesus Christ would teach is what is in the Bible. The two are just alike. If we are going to find out what to do, we would study the Bible and let the Holy Spirit show us the meaning of it. Then we will find what the Lord Jesus Christ would have us to do.

There is a more basic need in us than just knowing what Christ wants us to do. The truth of the matter is we need a disposition to want to do it. Deep down in our hearts, no matter what we know to do, we often don't want to do that very thing. The disposition to want to do the will of God is something we do not have in us naturally. As humans we think of this as a matter of will power. I may face something that I do not want to do and I make myself do it. I do this by an exercise of what I call my will. It may be raining outside and I don't want to go out in the rain, but I make myself go. Because I am a man of strong enough will power, I go ahead and do it. I may on occasion stay up to work when I don't want to work. I would rather go out to play, but I must work. So I exercise my will power and I work. But we do not always recognize that this will power is not enough. We may have an idea, "Well, I can do it if I want to." By that we mean it just depends on us if we want to do it. What we do not realize is that we do not always want to. We do not always realize that it is as true about us as it was with Paul when he describes himself in Romans, chapter seven, "What I would that do I not but what I hate, that do I." I do not do what I want to do. What I know I should not do, that I do. It sounds rather mixed up, but the truth of the matter is we have trouble with our inward hearts and our desires. Here is our great lack – we just do not want to do anything other than what pleases us. The will to obey God, the inward desire to do what God wants us to do does not come naturally. The Lord Jesus warned Peter about this saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." I can have great sympathy with people who say that with them it is not that they lack the *will* power, so much as they lack the *won't* power. Not only can they not make up their minds what they *will* do, but neither can they make up their minds what they *won't* do.

The Christian gospel tells what God has provided for us. God has actually arranged to put into our hearts the disposition to do His will. This was intimated in the Old Testament book of Joel, chapter two, verse 28, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the hand-maids in those days will I pour out my spirit." This came to pass at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured into the hearts of the Christians. What the Bible tells us, and what Peter told the people on the Day of Pentecost, is that when Jesus Christ went from this world up into heaven. and was received by God the Father, He sat down at the right hand of God. All power was given to Him and the Lord Jesus Christ poured out into the hearts of His people the Holy Spirit of God.

What that actually means in a practical way is that He put into our hearts in the presence of the Holy Spirit of God the will to desire to do the will of God. We are influenced to do the will of God. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself came into this world to do the will of His Father, and He obeyed God perfectly.

He lived His life as a pattern of perfect obedience. In a remarkable way by the power of God, the Holy Spirit will take the pattern of perfect obedience that is in Christ Jesus and put it into our hearts. We will be inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit until it is the will of the Lord Jesus Christ operating in us and moving us into the will of God. Just as the Lord Jesus came into this world to do the will of His Father and performed that Will perfectly, so He sends His Holy Spirit into our hearts so that the Holy Spirit in us can incline our will to do the will of God. He will show us what God wants us to do and put it in our hearts to want to do it. The Lord Jesus Christ denied Himself. He was eventually led to the cross where He gave up His life on our behalf. When you and I are filled with the Spirit we are moved to deny ourselves and to crucify ourselves with Christ Jesus. We take up our cross to follow Him until, as Paul, we can say, "I am crucified with Christ."

The way in which Paul was crucified with Christ was that the Holy Spirit moved in his heart and inclined Paul to self denial. Paul reckoned his own will and desires dead. He counted himself as belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ even in his death. The Holy Spirit makes this thing operative; so that a person can reckon himself dead unto sin. Not only that, but the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; so we will be raised from the dead with Him. The Holy Spirit can do this. He actually arouses us, He quickens us, He makes us alive unto God and He makes us sensitive to the will of God so that we want to do His will. Anybody who is filled with the Spirit has this constant experience all the time. He finds himself denying himself. He feels actually willing to forego his own personal interest. He denies himself, takes up his cross and follows obediently and willingly the Lord Jesus Christ. None of this is ever done out of fear; none of this is ever done out of compulsion. We do it because we want to. The nearest thing that there is to anything like this on earth is when a person is in love. When a person is in love he feels that he wants to do certain things for the one he loves. If you ever had a teacher that you really loved, you wanted to please that teacher. If you ever had a manager that you really loved, you wanted to obey that manager. You wanted to please him and be well pleasing in his sight. Now the Lord affects us this way when His Holy Spirit is in our hearts. We have a new disposition which is that we want to be well-pleasing in the sight of God – just the way the Lord Jesus Christ was when He was here on earth. So when He says, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh," He is actually saying in effect, "I will pour my Holy Spirit into the human heart and I will extend the work of the Lord Jesus Christ into that human heart." He will move that human heart into obedience to God, carrying him by the power of God into the obedience of God. Actually this was made possible for us by Christ Jesus. Because Christ Jesus came into the world, we have in us, as Christians, the disposition to want to be well-pleasing to God.

The New Covenant

These days I have been talking to you about the things which the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to do. He came to save us, but He came to do much more than to die. He came to take away our sins and our guilt. This He arranged for and will accomplish. He actually came to bring salvation to us and to deliver us. He came to help us establish the New Covenant with God.

One of the first things you learn, even as little children, is that if you do what you ought to do, it is good, and if you do what you should not do, it is bad. The Bible says if you do the will of God He will bless you; if you do not do the will of God, He will curse you. We find out in this world that there is such a thing as seed time and harvest. You do something, and then you get something. We find out that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Now all of this is a matter of law. Whatsoever a man doeth, that shall he also reap, and life is like that. But human beings are so foolish. You and I are far more foolish than we ordinarily want to admit. Even when a man knows that he is doing something that will be to his hurt, he will not stop from doing it. This is not only true of the other fellow; it is even true about me. Down deep within me, if I find that I am doing something that I shouldn't be doing, I'll keep on doing what I want to, even when I know that it is against my own best interest. You say, "How foolish can a man get?" Well, I'll tell you he can be just exactly that foolish. What are we going to do? Tell him what is the right thing to do? Listen, brother, he already knows what to do and he doesn't do it. So you tell him to do right. What difference does it make?

God has promised a new way. He calls it in the Bible a *New Covenant*. It is a very simple idea, but I do not know how easily we can understand it. Let me see if I can help you understand this New Covenant. Instead of leaving it up to me and allowing me to decide what I am going to do, God arranges to have the right thing done in me; so that the results will be good because He does it that way.

The Old Testament told of God's chosen man, the Messiah, who would perfectly keep the law. This turned out to be His own beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Almighty God arranged it so that you and I could have Christ's perfect obedience actually put into our hearts. Then God will deal with us not on the basis of our own deeds but on the basis of what Christ has done. Christ Jesus would perfectly keep the law in His own life, then He would suffer for our sins. (He did not need to suffer for sin, as He did not sin.) Then Christ would be raised from the dead so we could be raised from the dead. Through faith we can have His will in us. This is to be done by the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit shows me what Christ has done and promises that within me a drastic change takes place, with a new life being born. I am born again – this time with the life of Christ living in me – so that actually I find that I want to do what Christ wants me to do. Now, when that is being done, God will bless me. That is the way God is going to do it and my whole relationship with God depends upon what I do in Christ Jesus. It is not a case of finding out, watching me to see if I do good and then rewarding me, or if I do bad, then punishing me. But God has turned it around. He starts out giving me a new life and then lets me live, moving me and then lets me act. God does for me in His grace and mercy what I could never do for myself.

Some years ago I had a personal experience of this in a way that I want to tell you because it illustrates it so clearly what I mean. I was a student in the city of Los Angeles, California. I did not have much money and so I had to work to stay in school. I remember my particular job at that time was trimming loganberry vines. If you know anything about loganberries you know that they are cultivated blackberries. They are very tall and very strong with long, vicious thorns or barbs on them. One afternoon I had the job of trimming a number of these loganberry vines. I was earning fifty cents an hour. When I worked four hours, I got two dollars. My shirt was torn; my hands were torn, and I was scratched all over. It had been

a hot afternoon and I felt mean when I was going back to where I was staying. On my way back I passed through a park downtown that they call Pershing Square. A man stepped up and asked me for money. The first feeling I had was one of anger. He provoked me. I could have told him simply he made me mad because he did just that. I thought about how hot I was, how miserable I was and how my shirt was torn from working in those loganberries. Here this man had been sitting on a park bench all afternoon, and he stepped up and asked me for some money. It just made me mad, but I didn't leave it there. I found myself, in a strange way, feeling that I should give something to this man. I knew deep down in my heart that I had to give him something, if it were true that he really needed it. I remember I asked him, "Do you really need any help?" He said, "Yes, I do." I said, "What kind of help do you need." "Well," he said, "I haven't had anything to eat all day. I don't have any money. Tonight it's going to be kind of cold and I don't have the fifteen cents to get a cot at the Salvation Army or ten cents for a cup of coffee and two donuts." That's the way it was back in those days. He continued, "If I had a quarter, I could do this." I got to thinking about it. That twenty-five cents represented a half hour of misery among those loganberries. But you know I did it, and I didn't do it because I wanted to. My human nature rebelled against it. I had all the good reasons in the world to give this man nothing. There was another Spirit moving in me. I was being moved from within and I realized that if I really did what the Lord Jesus wanted me to do, I would give this man the money for something to eat and for a place to stay, because he needed it.

I remember how it was with me and with the Lord. I could have done better than I did, but I didn't. I could have been better than I was, but I wasn't. I didn't need to be as careless as I was. I didn't need to be as foolish as I was. I didn't need to do the wrong things that I was doing. At least I thought I didn't need to. I had the strength perhaps to do differently, but I didn't want to do differently. That's the way it had been. And likely that is the way it was with that man and why he didn't have a job. But now there was a new spirit in me. Here was a human being that was suffering. Here was a human being that was in trouble. I found myself giving him the money because that is what I felt the Lord Jesus would have done in my place. Actually He strengthened me to do it. I remember I said to this man, "Well, I am going to give you the money but you're not welcome to it." He looked at me so funny. I explained to him, "Personally deep down in my heart I think you could have gone out and worked for it, and if you didn't earn it you should not have it, but I'll have to tell you that I have learned to know one Person who understood me very well and knew right well I could have done differently. On my behalf He suffered and He died for me, and because Jesus Christ gave His life for me, which is far more than what I am going to do for you, I am going to give you this money. I never saw you before, and I may never see you again, but you are a human being and I am going to give it to you."

Well, I could tell you more of the story, but you get the idea. You see, I was inwardly moved to do something that the Lord Jesus would have done. You'll feel that way about people. When you have this thing working in you. you will be kind to people who are not kind to you. You will be faithful to people who are not faithful to you. You will be helpful to people who are very selfish and you will do these things not because of them, but because of the Spirit that is within you. The Lord Jesus will have activated in you the New Covenant arrangement with God. For God works in you "to will and to do of his good pleasure." This is also another reason why Jesus Christ came into this world. He came to make it possible to bring into my heart and life the disposition and the Spirit and the power to do the will of God and to be blessed because of it.

The Unhewn Stone

I am sure that each of us have in mind that if we wanted to learn more about God we would study more in the Bible. Not only does the Bible tells us about God, but it tells us particularly of God's way of dealing with us. The Bible tells us about life and we can learn many things about our daily living when we are reading and studying the Bible. In addition to this, the Bible tells us some things about what God will do for us that we never dreamed of. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

I am going to refer to an idea, to a concept, that you will pick up out of the Bible that needs to be explained, that is very important. It is the idea of the *unhewn stone*, You use the word *hew* when you speak of chopping a thing with an ax. When you think about a piece of wood, a log that is shaped by cutting it with an ax, you talk about hewing the log into a certain shape. When you speak of something that is unhewn, you mean something that has not been cut with an ax. The same is true with a stone. Ordinarily, as you find stones lying on the road, or in the fields, some are round, some are rough, some are square, some are angular. If you want to fit them anywhere they usually always have to be chipped or cut down to fit. This matter of chipping them off and fixing them to be the right size and the right shape is called "hewing the stone."

When you would speak of an unhewn stone you mean a stone that has not been affected by man. In other words, man has not worked on it. It has not been cut and it has not been chiseled in any fashion. This term is used about the Lord Jesus Christ. There is an Old Testament passage that speaks about the Coming of Christ in which He is referred to as an unhewn stone. What that actually means is that what He is and what He does is not controlled or influenced by human ideas. Human beings did not make Him, human beings did not shape Him, human beings did not tell Him, and human beings do not stop Him. What He does, He does as from God and man does not have anything to do with it.

I suppose you could put it something like this: if you see a rose growing in your garden and the lovely flowers are appearing on that rose, you know they were not painted there. This is not an artist's creation. No one went out there and painted that rose. Perhaps you see a tree growing that is lovely in its shape and form. It has perfect balance and symmetry, but nobody has trimmed it, nobody has cut its branches. It just grew naturally that way. It is an untrimmed tree. That is the idea here when we speak about the unhewn stone. I want to tell you about the incident where the reference occurred because there is a sense in which Jesus Christ comes into our life as the result of something that God does. It is not based on human judgment. It is not a matter of our psychology. It is a matter of the sociological forces in the community. It is not a matter of what people want to do at all. It is something that God wants to do and that God produces inside of us.

The story is found in the book of Daniel in the second chapter. The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed that he saw a great standing image that was made of different kinds of metal. There was a head of gold, shoulders of silver, a body of brass, and there were legs of iron and feet of clay. While he saw this in his dream, he saw a stone falling. What was characteristic about this stone was that it was unhewn. Nobody's chisel or mallet had ever touched it. It was not affected by any action of man. This stone was directly from God and fell on the feet of the image and broke it to pieces. The stone went on to smash the whole image to powder. Then the stone grew and filled the whole earth. The one thing I want to point out in this is that Daniel indicated that that unhewn stone is the Messiah coming from God into this world. He destroys the kingdoms of this world.

There is much, much more in the picture but this much I want to get out of it for you and for me. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into my life is something from God. It does not originate in me. It is

not even from my family. It is something that comes from God. Much of my life I get from my family. So much of our lives is prepared for us. I speak the English language. I picked it up from my folk. I wear clothing of a certain kind – a coat, trousers, a shirt, a tie – all these things were figured out by other people. I did not design my clothes. I have certain manners. If a lady came into the room, I would rise. That is what I would want to do. Why? Because everyone else does. If you talked with me, I would try to answer you courteously. Why? Everyone else does. If I sit down at the table to eat, I'll use a knife and fork. It isn't polite for me to eat with my fingers. My meat, my vegetable, the bread, the butter or margarine will each be prepared and served in a certain way. I may make my choice, but there are very few of us who would be able to plan a new dish for us to eat.

When I drive on the street I am going to drive on a street that men made. Even my car was designed and built according to someone else's ideas. When I drive my car, men have arranged the rules and regulations. Everything that you do is according to what has been agreed upon and has been set up. Most of our life is handed to us in a way that has already been decided. Then I make up my mind what I want to do and I choose this and I choose that. I am telling you all of this because this is our human way of living.

When Christ Jesus comes into the heart He comes in just like this stone that was not touched with human hands. When He comes in, there is nothing human about it. It is from God. God works in the heart, and I live it out. Surely I live it out among people, but the design of it is from God. That I would in my heart be moved to yield myself to God. to deny myself that I might do His will, is from God. And it shatters everything else. It takes over above everything else. When we get to know what He wants us to do, we do it. That is not human. The Bible tells us that God will meet with us and will deal with us and will bring into our lives something new and different and better than anything we have ever had before. This is in Christ Jesus. Wherever the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, changes occur. The man that is in Christ Jesus is a new creation. The wonderful thing about that is that if you are in Christ Jesus you just yield yourself to Him and live. You do not have to learn a lot of things. You look into His face and you just become what you were created to be. You will unfold as naturally as the lily unfolds on the stem. You will be yourself as naturally as the flower on the bush. It will be the grace of God working in you. This is done for us by Christ Jesus. He came into this world to live and die for us. He gave His Holy Spirit to us that there might be formed in us something to the glory of God that man does not make and man cannot stop and man cannot change. It is the unhewn stone of God's grace working in you.