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July 30th: Nehemiah 9 & John 5:25-47

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A prayer of covenant rededication. The testimony to the Son.

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Transcript

Nehemiah chapter 9. Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month, the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read from the book of the law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day.

For another quarter of it they made confession and worshipped the Lord their God. On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Benai, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Benai, Sherubbiah, Benai, and Canaanai. And they cried with a loud voice to the Lord their God.

Then the Levites Jeshua, Kadmiel, Benai, Hashabneiah, Sherubbiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Petahiah said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You are

the Lord, you alone, you have made heaven the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them.

And you preserve all of them, and the host of heaven worships you. You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram, and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, and gave him the name Abraham. You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Gergesite.

And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous. And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heard their cry at the Red Sea, and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants, and all the people of his land. For you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers.

And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day. And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land. And you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters.

By a pillar of cloud you led them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. You came down on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments. And you made known to them your holy Sabbath, and commanded them commandments and statutes, and a law by Moses your servant.

You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, and brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst. And you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them. But they and our fathers acted presumptuously, and stiff in their neck, and did not obey your commandments.

They refused to obey, and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them. But they stiffened their neck, and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.

Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf, and said, This is your God that brought you up out of Egypt, and had committed great blasphemies, you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. You gave your good spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold your manner from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst.

Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not swell. And you gave them kingdoms and peoples, and allotted to them every corner.

So they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. You multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, and you brought them into the land that you had told their fathers to enter and possess. So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and you subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would.

And they captured fortified cities, and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn, vineyards, olive orchards, and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in your great goodness. Nevertheless, they were disobedient, and rebelled against you, and cast your law behind their back, and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies.

Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you, and you heard them from heaven. And according to your great mercies you gave them saviors, who saved them from the hand of their enemies.

But after they had rest, they did evil again before you, and you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them. Yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven. And many times you delivered them according to your mercies, and you warned them in order to turn them back to your law.

Yet they acted presumptuously, and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which, if a person does them, he shall live by them. And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not obey. Many years you bore with them, and warned them by your spirit through your prophets.

Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless in your great mercies you did not make an end of them, or forsake them.

For you are a gracious and merciful God. Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully, and we have acted wickedly.

Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law, or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them, even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them. They did not serve you, or turn from their wicked

works. Behold, we are slaves this day, in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts.

Behold, we are slaves, and its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies, and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress. Because of all this, we make a firm covenant in writing.

On the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests. The people had fasted in response to Ezra's reading of the law on the Feast of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month. However, that was supposed to be a day of rejoicing, and their mourning was inappropriate on it.

Yet mourning for their sins in the light of the law was important, and something that needed to be done at an appropriate time. Two days after the end of the Feast of Tabernacles and the subsequent feast, Nehemiah chapter nine describes the people gathering together to mourn as they had intended to do earlier. A day of collective repentance and rededication was important at this point.

The people expressed their mourning and penitence with fasting, sackcloth, and earth on their heads. The day of fasting specifically concerns the sins of the people of Israel, not just or even primarily their personal sins, but the sins of the entire congregation. Consequently, they separate from the foreigners among them in order to confess.

They devoted a quarter of the day to listening to the reading of the law. By this point, over the course of the month, the Jews had listened to three marathon readings of the law. After this reading, confession and worship took up another quarter of the day.

The confession and worship was led by two groups of Levites with similar sets of names. The fact that we see so many of the same names in the two lists is likely an indication that certain of the Levites participated in both of the two groups, and it seems most likely that the two groups were led by the first few names mentioned. Jeshua, Kadmiel, and Benai opened both of the two lists.

The first group led the people in crying out with a loud voice to God, and the second led the people in the great prayer of confession that follows. The long prayer of confession that follows recounts Israel's history and the Lord's dealing with them to that point in time, drawing heavily upon earlier scripture and telling a narrative that ties together much of the Old Testament historical witness. At many points in what follows, we'll hear echoes of the wording of earlier historical narratives.

We find comparable passages in places like Psalm 78. The people's covenant relationship with the Lord is a collective and intergenerational reality, and at pivotal moments of covenant renewal, they reconnect themselves with the thread of God's dealing with them. The prayer opens with praise, taking its introductory words from the Psalms.

The account of the Lord's great deeds begins with creation itself. The Lord is the creator and sustainer of all, the one upon whom all creation depends, and the one worshipped in the heavens above. Everything, both in the heavens and the earth, is created by him.

As the creator, the Lord is unique. In the ordering of the Psalms, we see a similar prioritization of creation and providence in the recounting of the Lord's great deeds. In places like Psalm 104, which precedes Psalms speaking of covenant history, there is a categorical and ultimate difference between the creator and all creatures, and the Lord alone is the creator.

From creation, the prayer moves to the story of the Lord's call of Abraham, the great father of Israel, whom he called out of Ur of the Chaldeans. In two verses, it summarizes his story. He was called, referring to chapters 11 and 12 of Genesis, and he was renamed Abraham, referring to chapter 17 when the Lord confirmed his covenant with him.

Verse 8 seems to refer back to Genesis chapter 15, especially verse 6, and he believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness. The prayer declares that the Lord made his covenant with Abraham as he was found faithful. In that chapter, the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, promising him the land of Canaan, of whose peoples the prayer gives an abbreviated list.

Looking back upon the promise that the Lord made to Abraham, their father at that time, the Levites declare that the Lord has kept his word because he is a righteous God who keeps covenant. Throughout the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, there are multiple allusions back to the story of the Exodus, a story with which the returnees seem to have felt a peculiar resonance, unsurprisingly in the Lord leading them back to the land. They saw some resemblance between what had happened to them and the Lord's first leading his people out of Egypt and bringing them into the land in the first place.

The Lord's faithfulness to his promise to Abraham, along with his power as the creator and his justice as the judge of the world, was manifest in the deliverance from Egypt, and the judgment upon Pharaoh and his people in the plagues and in the Red Sea. The Lord made a name for himself in the presence of the nations. He also showed his closeness to and care for his people in leading them by the pillar of cloud and fire.

We can hear echoes of the language of Moses' Song at the Sea in the statement of verse 11, and you cast their pursuers into the depths as a stone into mighty waters. The Levites were clearly praying this prayer as people who had been steeped in the word of scripture. At Sinai, the Lord spoke to his people, giving them the law by Moses.

The prayer here emphasises that the Lord made known his Sabbath to them at this point. The Sabbath, in addition to being the fourth commandment, was arguably the great sign of the covenant that was comparable to the sign of circumcision given to Abraham as the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. It was a sign of the Lord's power as

creator.

He rested on the seventh day of creation. Also a sign of his deliverance of his people from Egypt. It formed the basis of their festal calendar.

Their whole calendar was ordered around sevens. Not just their religious life, but also their civil life as a people was supposed to be shaped by this. The way they gave their servants rest one day every week, and then the way that they released people in the Sabbath year and in the year of Jubilee.

In the conclusion of the account of giving the law, we read in Exodus chapter 31 verses 12 to 17, "...that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done. But the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord.

Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." The observance of the day of the Sabbath and also of its principles of release are clearly important issues in the book of Nehemiah.

Leading the people through the wilderness, the Lord had also shown his power and his provision for them. The Levites here mention the gift of the manna and the provision of the water, alluding back to chapters 16 and 17 of the book of Exodus. However, although the wilderness was a time of divine provision and protection for the people, it was also a time when they repeatedly tested and tempted the Lord, where they disobeyed, rebelled against him, and grumbled against him and his servant Moses.

The Levites mention the two most egregious sins of the wilderness generation, although they reversed them in their order. In Numbers chapter 13 and 14, after the spying out of the land, they had refused the land and determined, rejecting the Lord's gift, to turn back to slavery in Egypt instead. This sin, in the second year of their time in the wilderness, led to them wandering for forty years.

However, the Lord did not utterly cast off his people at this time. The Levites here allude back to the Lord's statement of his name, in Exodus chapter 34 verses 6-7. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.

That statement had been made in the context of the people's sin with the golden calf, which the Levites mention after the sin of refusing to enter the land. This was the

people's great act of idolatry. Nonetheless, even after the people's blasphemies and their rejection of his great gifts, the Lord did not strip them of his mercies.

He continued to lead them by the pillar of cloud and fire, and he continued miraculously to provide for them with water from the rock and with the manna. And in addition to such provision for their basic necessities, he also showed his kindness to them in preserving their clothing and preventing their feet from becoming sore and swollen as a result of the walking. Even in the wilderness, they were never without what they needed.

From the wilderness experience, the Levites move on to tell of the people's taking of the land. This is told in two key stages. First of all, the people capture the Transjordan, defeating the kings Syhon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan.

Having captured the Transjordan, they enter into the land of Canaan itself. The Lord subdues both before them, delivering their peoples into their hand and giving them a rich land and resources that they had not built for themselves. In verse 25, the Levites echo the language of Deuteronomy chapter 6, specifically verses 10 to 12.

And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. Recalling this verse and the later words of the Song of Moses in chapter 32 verse 15, But Jashurin grew fat and kicked, you grew fat, stout, and sleek. Then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the rock of his salvation.

We might have a sense of ominous foreboding about what is going to be said next. Sure enough, in verses 26 and following, the people's failure when they had entered into the land is recounted in detail. They rebel, are disobedient against the Lord, cast his law behind their back, and kill his prophets.

They are also said to have committed great blasphemies. We might think of all the stories of idolatry in the Old Testament. As a result of their sin, the Lord gives them into the hand of their enemies, but he does not utterly abandon them.

He raises up saviours for them. Again, we might think of the story of the judges here. The yo-yoing character of the people's relationship with the Lord during the period of the judges is represented in places like verse 28.

But after they had rest, they did evil again before you, and you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies. Yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies. God's wrestling with his people was for their own good.

The Lord warned his people in order to turn them back to his law, and if they obeyed his law and observed it, they would live by it. It would be a means of their blessing and fulfilment as a people. The Lord was patient with them and dealt with them by his spirit through the prophets, and even when he gave them into the hands of the nations, he did not utterly cast them off or forsake them, because he is gracious and merciful.

Considering the amount of reading of the law that had occurred over that past month, it should not surprise us to hear within the words of these Levites the metabolisation of the words of the Torah into prayer. In verse 32, the Levites moved from recounting what God has done in the past to petitioning on the basis of what God has done in the past and the way he has revealed his character through those things for him to act decisively in their situation in the present. In his treatment of them, the Lord had kept his covenant with his people, even though they had forsaken him.

The people and their leaders had sinned in the most aggravated fashion, rejecting the Lord even in the midst of his bounty. Now as a result, even as the fortunes of Jerusalem are starting to change, and the Lord is raising up its walls and returning its people, the people are in a continued state of slavery on account of what they have done. They are weak among the nations and the wealth of the land still goes to Persia.

They are ruled over by foreign pagan kings who have dominion over their very bodies. Even as they experience a window of relative blessing at this time, they are in great distress. The Levites' response to the situation is to lead the people in making a firm covenant in writing, a seal document signed by all of their leaders.

In this document, they would rededicate themselves to the service of the Lord, whose praises and whose faithfulness in their history they had just recounted. A question to consider. There are a number of examples in scripture of retelling the story of God's dealings with his people.

Such retellings serve a number of different purposes, and depending upon the purpose that is being served, different things can be brought to the foreground. Can you identify some other examples of retelling covenant history in scripture, and identify some of the things that are being foregrounded within them, and the purposes that they are serving? John 5, verses 25-47 Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own.

As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me. If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.

You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth, not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning

and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John, for the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me, and the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me, his voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life, and tis they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people, but I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me.

If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe when you receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? The second half of John chapter 5 continues the discourse that followed the healing of the infirm man at the sheep pool on the Sabbath. Jesus had just spoken about the relationship between the work of the Father and his work, and he develops his points further here, specifically in relation to the eschatological acts of giving life to the dead and judging all.

Some of the statements that Jesus makes concerning himself in this passage are truly astonishing in their strength. In the verses that immediately preceded our passage, Jesus had declared that those who hurt him and believed had passed from death to life, and would not enter into judgment. He elaborates that point here, making it in a more eschatological form.

The greater weighted eschatological works of God, resurrection and judgment, are being and will be effected through the Son. Once again, Jesus speaks of an hour that is coming, a recurring motif in the Gospel of John. This coming hour will be one in which the dead are raised.

Here the means of resurrection is hearing the voice of the Son of God and living. We might think of the raising of Lazarus in chapter 11 verse 43, brought forth from his grave as Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. The resurrection that Jesus describes at this point is one that is already occurring in his ministry.

It is taking place as a new people are being formed through the hearing of his word, as he described in the preceding verse. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Such a faithful response to the word of Jesus might seem to be worthy of celebration, yet speaking of it in terms of resurrection might seem excessive. However, although it might not seem to be remarkable or dramatic, it is anticipatory of final resurrection. Elsewhere, in ways reminiscent of Ezekiel prophesying to the dry bones in Ezekiel chapter 37, we see that Jesus is forming a renewed Israel around himself in the course of his ministry.

How people responded to the voice of the Son of Man as he spoke in his earthly ministry would determine how they would stand in the final resurrection and judgment. In the work of the Spirit, through the words of Jesus, the event of resurrection is already mysteriously taking place. People are passing from death to life and eternal fates are being determined.

The power of Jesus' voice to raise people to new life is a manifestation of the fact that the Son has life in himself. Elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus speaks of giving living water or of the rivers of water of the Spirit flowing forth from him. In John chapter 3 verses 34 to 35, we were told by John the Baptist that the Father has given all things into the hands of the Son and that he had the Spirit without measure.

As the man of the Spirit, Jesus has life in himself and can give it to others. He does this through his words, which he later describes in chapter 6 verse 63 as words of spirit and life. In addition to the power of life, the Father has given the Son the authority of judgment.

It is through the Son, as the Son of Man, that the Father will judge the world. Jesus is possibly here alluding to Daniel chapter 7, where the Son of Man, in a prophecy to be fulfilled in the years that followed, would be elevated to power by the Ancient of Days, receiving the kingdom formally controlled by the beasts. Daniel chapter 7 verses 13 to 14 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man, and he came to the Ancient of Days, or was presented before him.

And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. The raising to eternal life that was occurring then, through the words of Jesus, the Man of the Spirit, anticipated the later resurrection, another hour that was to come.

That later hour, while distinct from the coming hour Jesus spoke of that was in the process of beginning in his ministry, is not only similar to, but also inseparably related to it. As Jesus would later illustrate to an extent in the raising of Lazarus, that later hour would involve the calling forth of the dead from their tombs to the general resurrection. People would be divided according to their works, those who had done good to the resurrection of life, and those who had done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Such a division in judgment according to works is a division of people according to their

fruits, a very common theme in the New Testament. Of course, Jesus is not teaching that the works themselves are what have brought about people's passage from death to life. The movement from death to life is accomplished through the power of his words, giving life to the dead as they are received by faith.

The works are the effects of the new life that he has given, that will naturally follow this. Good fruits help us to recognize the good trees, but it is the good tree that produces good fruit, rather than the good fruit that produces the good tree. The good fruit, rather, makes the good tree manifest and brings it to its fullest expression.

The intimate and inseparable bond between the Father and the Son is seen in the fact that the Son never acts independently. Whatever the Son does, he does as an expression of the will of the Father who sent him. Although he had spoken of the Son in the third person, now Jesus speaks clearly of himself in the first person.

Although it was already clear, now it is absolutely evident that he is the Son of whom he is speaking. The Son, to whom all judgment is delivered, now answers his accusers by presenting witnesses, if he were simply to make such claims of himself on the strength of his own witness, they would not stand legally. As to be established, matters require multiple witnesses.

However, there are witnesses beyond Jesus himself that he can bring forth. First of all, there is John the Baptist. John bore witness to the truth, and the testimony that John the Baptist bears is a true one.

Many of the people had recognized the authority of John as a prophet, and the witness of John to Jesus, especially in his baptism, is prominent in each of the Gospels. In the final week of Jesus' ministry, he deftly deploys the witness of John against opponents in Matthew chapter 21, verses 23 to 27. And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority? Jesus answered them, I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man? And they discussed it among themselves, saying, If we say from heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe him? But if we say from man, we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, We do not know. And he said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Jesus knew that his opponents could not easily dismiss John, and John had borne a clear and powerful witness to him. Beyond this, however, Jesus' very acts testified to his character and to the fact that he was sent by God. We have already seen Jesus perform three signs in this Gospel, besides the many miracles and great works that he was doing.

The people had seen the infirm man that he had just healed. How would Jesus enjoy such power and display such remarkable deeds of healing and restoration were he not sent by God? Those works were evidence that he was doing the work of his Father and that his Father was with him. Beyond even these, though, the Father himself bore witness to the Son.

They had not seen God at any time, nor heard his voice, yet the Father was being made known through the Son, as chapter 1 verse 18 declared. Jesus' opponents studied the Scriptures, believing that eternal life was to be found in them. In this belief they were correct, but because Jesus himself is found in them, the Scriptures themselves bear witness to him.

The refusal of the religious authorities to come to Jesus was evidence that they were not receiving the Scriptures' testimony, the testimony of the very words that they prided themselves in. Tragically, in refusing the Scriptures' testimony to Jesus, and not receiving his words, they were forfeiting the life that he offered. What matters is not human praise or glory.

Jesus does not consider such glory or honour worthy of account. Indeed, he would go on to the greatest place of human shame, stripped, dishonoured and hanging on the cross, ridiculed by all. What really matters is the glory and testimony offered by the Father.

On the other hand, his accusers were preoccupied with the glory that other people offered. They would not accept the Son when he came in the name of the Father, but they would readily accept a proud human being who came on his own authority. Their entire approach to honour and respect made them incapable of receiving God's gift and testimony.

In a tragic twist, they would discover that the very figure in whom they placed their confidence and hope, Moses, would be the very person who accused them. Jesus himself would not need to accuse them, because Moses testified to Jesus. Jesus is likely alluding to Moses' statements concerning the prophet to come.

This prophecy was already alluded to earlier in chapter 1 verse 21, in the conversation with John the Baptist, who had denied that he was that figure. Deuteronomy chapter 18 verses 15 to 19 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. It is to him you shall listen, just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, or see this great fire any more, lest I die.

And the Lord said to me, They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

Jesus was the prophet like Moses. If they believed Moses, they would naturally believe Jesus. If they did not believe Moses, they would be unable to receive Jesus.

Jesus' witness and Moses' witness go hand in hand. Their rejection of Moses and the prophet he foretold meant that the prophecy concerning those who rejected that prophet would be fulfilled in their case. A question to consider.

Jesus claims that his accusers do not have the word of God abiding in them, in verse 38, nor do they have the love of God within them, in verse 42. What might these two claims imply for those who do receive Jesus?