I. Third Prophecy About Resurrection, from Peter (Deuteronomy 18)

a. Peter mentions a third prophecy about the resurrection of the Christ, in his speech to the Jews in Solomon's Portico in **Acts 3**. Here Peter quotes from **Deuteronomy 18:15**, again following the LXX. Listen carefully.

   i. In **Acts 3:22-23** Peter says, "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'the Lord your God will *raise up* for you a Prophet like me from among your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever he says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"

   ii. Peter concludes four verses later, in **Acts 3:26,** "God, having raised up his servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you away from your iniquities."

      1. The force of Peter's argument hangs on one word in the **Deuteronomy 18** prophecy. Moses actually said that God would *raise up* (not 'send', 'commission' nor 'appoint') one special prophet like him in the future. All God's people must heed this prophet, or else face dire consequences!

b. Peter is quoting from a prophecy given by Moses shortly before his death. The Jewish nation had been delivered from captivity in Egypt, and spent 40 years in the Wilderness before Moses died and Joshua led them into the Promised Land. Therefore, this prophecy may have been given 1,400 years before the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Moses told the Israelites:

   i. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers; you shall hear him. According to all that you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying: 'We shall not any more hear the voice of the Lord our God and again see this great fire – and we shall not die.' And the Lord said to me: 'They are right in all that they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet just like you from among their brothers, and I will give my word in his mouth, and he shall speak to them whatever I command him. And the person who does not hear his words, whatever the prophet may speak in My Name, I will exact vengeance from him.'" (**Deuteronomy 18:15-19**, LXX, NETS)

      1. Both places (Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:15** and **18:18** in the LXX; and Peter in **Acts 3:22** and **Acts 3:26**), the term translated "raised up" is the same Greek word ἀνίστημι (anistami). This is the same Greek word for "raised up" we found in the prophecies of **2 Samuel 7** and **1 Chronicles 17**.

ii. So, we can see the following points from the great prophecy in **Deuteronomy 18**, given through Moses perhaps *about 1400 years before the birth of Jesus*:

1. One special prophet who would be *like Moses* would come in the future.

    a. Eusebius (in Proof of the Gospel, book 3) pointed out that among all the prophets of the Old Testament, Moses was unique in that he brought laws from God to the people (all prophets after him simply called people to follow the Law of Moses).

    b. Therefore, Eusebius concluded, in order to be a prophet "like Moses", it would call for a prophet who would be *bringing new laws from God*! (Which of course Jesus did as we can see in the Sermon on the Mount, especially **Matthew 5** and elsewhere in the gospels.)

    c. There are *many other similarities* between Moses and Jesus, if we carefully compare their lives. For example: childhood in Egypt, evil king killed many male babies but he escapes, unusual miraculous way of crossing the sea, brought in the Passover Lamb sacrifice, led God's people out of slavery, fed thousands with bread from heaven, etc.

2. He would come from among their brothers (must be a fellow Jew).

3. God would (literally, according to Peter) <u>raise him up</u> (while people may have taken it figuratively in the past, God actually meant that he would literally RAISE HIM UP…first from death, and then ultimately to be seated at his right hand of God).

4. Anyone *who does not heed* what this prophet says will be punished severely by God; and cut off from God's people!

II. Fourth Prophecy About Resurrection, from Peter (1 Samuel 2)

a. Now I would like to discuss a <u>fourth prophecy</u> about the resurrection; a prophecy alluded to by Peter. In **Acts 3:24**, right after recounting the **Deuteronomy 18** prophecy, Peter states, "All the prophets, <u>*from Samuel*</u> and those who follow…have foretold these days". Why does Peter mention specifically "starting with <u>*Samuel*</u>"? Is there a prophecy from the mouth of Samuel, or from the time when Samuel was alive, about the resurrection of the Christ?

i. The birth and death of the prophet Samuel both occur within the book of **1 Samuel**. Therefore, if Peter is correct, there must be an important prophecy about the Christ somewhere within that book.

ii. **Question:** Can you think of any prophecies about the Anointed One, the *Christ,* in **1 Samuel**?

iii. I found one prophecy about the Anointed One (χριστός in the LXX) in **1 Samuel 2**.

iv. In **1 Samuel 2** (about 1200 years before the birth of Jesus) we find the young boy Samuel, son of Hannah and Elkanah, serving in the household of Eli the priest. At this time Eli was very old, and both of his sons had become very corrupt. A man of God comes to pronounce judgment on the house (family line) of Eli. The man of God rebukes Eli and pronounces the Word of the Lord to Eli, concluding with the statement:

1. "Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas. In one day, both of them shall die. Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do all that is in My heart and in My soul. I will build him a faithful house, and he shall walk before my Christ forever." (**1 Samuel 2:34-35**, LXX, OSB; where it is designated **1 Kingdoms 2**)

a. This specifically mentions the Anointed One, the Christ.

b. Here it says the Lord will "raise up" a faithful priest. In the LXX this is the exact same Greek word, ἀνίστημι (anistami) we found in the other passages where God said he would "*raise up*" a king and a prophet.

b. It seems rather clear to me that this prophecy about God raising up a faithful priest was in view of the writer of **Hebrews**.

i. After establishing the divinity of Christ, the Son of God, in **Hebrews chapter 1**, most of the rest of the book addresses His role as High Priest, and the implications of that for believers.

ii. The discussion of Christ's priesthood, which is developed in **chapters 3-10**, begins in **Hebrews 2** with the following:

1. "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and

High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." (**Hebrews 2:17–3:6**, NKJV)

2. One of the main themes running throughout **Hebrews** is Jesus being "the faithful High Priest", who is "over the house of God". This is in fulfillment of the prophecy issued by the man of God in **1 Samuel 2** (which is essentially paraphrased here in **Hebrews 2-3**).

    a. This foundational concept is further developed in the rest of **Hebrews**.

        i. He is the long-awaited, promised, faithful high priest.

        ii. In order to be a priest for us, He had to become like us (fully human, tempted, able to relate to our struggles).

        iii. He was a priest from a new line; not like those descended from Aaron. He is a priest "according to the order of Melchizedek". (**Psalm 110**)

        iv. He was the priest who offered the perfect sacrifice, once for all time.

        v. He was the priest who brought in a new covenant, with blood, thereby abolishing the old covenant and old priesthood.

        vi. He was the priest who could enter the Most Holy Place, the actual presence of God, with his own blood.

        vii. He was the faithful priest, who was put over the house of God. *Now, we are called to be that faithful house, if we hold fast to loving and obeying Him to the end.*

c. Early Christian writers saw this prophecy from **1 Samuel 2:34-36** ("I will raise up a faithful priest…") as referring to Jesus.

i. Lactantius, pointed out the significance of this prophecy about the priesthood of Christ:

1. "From which things it is evident that all the prophets declared concerning Christ, that it should come to pass at some time, that being born with a body of the race of David, He should build an eternal temple in honor of God, which is called the Church, and assemble all nations to the true worship of God.

2. "This is the faithful house, this is the everlasting temple; and if anyone has not sacrificed in this, he will not have the reward of immortality. And since Christ was the builder of this great and eternal temple, He must also have an everlasting priesthood in it; and there can be no approach to the shrine of the temple, and to the sight of God, except through Him who built the temple.

3. "David in the **109th Psalm** [designated ***Psalm 110*** in most modern Bibles] teaches the same, saying: 'Before the morning-star I begat You. The Lord hath sworn and will not change His mind; You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.' Also in the **first book of Kings** [*our **1 Samuel***] 'And I will raise me up a faithful Priest, who shall do all things that are in My heart; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk in my sight all his days.'"

a. (Source: Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*; in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 7, p. 113).

ii. Other early Christian writers who wrote about this prophecy in **1 Samuel 2** of God "raising up a *faithful priest"* as applying to Jesus Christ, include:

1. Hippolytus (c. 205 AD) an elder in the church in Rome, in his *Commentary on Daniel*, found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, p. 180.

2. Cyprian (c. 250 AD), bishop of the church in Carthage, North Africa, in his *Treatise No. 12*, book 1, testimony 17; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, p. 512.

3. Eusebius, bishop of the church in Caesarea (c. 260-339 AD), in *Proof of the Gospel*, book 4, chapter 16.

III. Fifth Prophecy About Resurrection, from Peter (Ezekiel 34)

a. In his first letter, Peter describes Jesus as being our great Shepherd. In that analogy, we are like sheep who wandered away but now have been brought back.

    i. "For you were like sheep going astray; but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." (**1 Peter 2:25**, NKJV)

    ii. The imagery Peter is using here, and even the words he is using, are from **Ezekiel 34:16**.

        1. God says in **Ezekiel 34**, "For thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will search for my sheep and care for (= *watch over*) them. As a shepherd seeks his flock…I shall seek the lost, bring back the misled *(= turn about the one that strayed*) …" (taken from **Ezekiel 34:11-16**, LXX, OSB)

        2. In **Ezekiel 34**, God describes His people as being like sheep.

        3. God sees that the people have been led by bad shepherds (bad spiritual leaders). As a result, they have wandered away.

        4. God promised He will provide a Shepherd who will be a good shepherd; one who will bring back those who have wandered away.

        5. The passage in **Ezekiel 34** in the LXX has the same five Greek words that Peter uses in **1 Peter 2:25**, which are:

            a. Sheep (referring to God's people)

            b. Wander away

            c. Brought back

            d. Shepherd (the one who brings back the sheep)

            e. He will "watch over" them (verb form of the word "overseer" or "bishop")

b. If Peter sees Jesus as the Shepherd prophesied in **Ezekiel 34**, let's look at that chapter more closely.

    i. Timeframe: Written around the time that Judah was taken into captivity to Babylon; c. 580-590 BC.

    ii. "I shall *raise up* one Shepherd over them, and He will tend them, even my Servant David. He shall be their Shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God; and David will be the Ruler in their midst. I, the Lord have spoken. I will make a *covenant of peace* with David…" (**Ezekiel 34:23-25a**, LXX, OSB)

1. The Lord says, "I will <u>*raise up*</u> one Shepherd"

    a. Again, here in the LXX the word for "raise up" is the same Greek word we saw in the other prophecies: ἀνίστημι.

    b. I believe that Lactantius was alluding to the significance of the statement "I will raise up", in **Ezekiel 34** when he wrote:

        i. "He remembered the days of old, who <u>*raised up from the earth*</u> a shepherd of the sheep."

        ii. Clearly, Lactantius is referring to the statement in **Ezekiel 34** that God would "raise up" a shepherd; and he saw this as a prophecy that Jesus, this shepherd, would be *raised up, physically, from the grave*!

        iii. (Source: Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, book 4, chapter 12; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 7, p. 111).

2. Since King David has been dead for 400 years, the "David" reference (tying back to the prophecy of **2 Samuel 7** and **1 Chronicles 17**) obviously refers to the *seed of* David.

3. It clearly specifies in most MSS of the LXX that there would be <u>*one*</u> shepherd (specific) over them.

4. This shepherd would be "a ruler *in their midst".* He would be among God's people.

5. His rule would be marked by a "covenant of peace".

c. Obviously, all the terms of this prophecy apply directly to Jesus.

d. Other implications of this prophecy, in understanding related passages in the New Testament.

    i. From the closing benediction of **Hebrews**:

        1. "Now may the <u>God of peace</u> who <u>brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead</u>, that great <u>Shepherd of the sheep</u>, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," (**Hebrews 13:20**, NKJV)

        2. Three points in **Hebrews 13:20** that tie back to **Ezekiel 34**.

            a. "God of peace" (**Ezekiel 34:25** speaks of the covenant of peace).

b. "Who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead" (In **Ezekiel 34:23** the Lord says, "I shall *raise up* one Shepherd").

c. "That great Shepherd of the sheep" (as noted above)

ii. Recall the famous passage in **John 10**, where Jesus says, "I am *the* good Shepherd".

1. Jesus said, "I am *the good shepherd*. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep…

2. "…I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

3. "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

4. "…I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again…" (from **John 10:11–18**, NKJV)

5. The points Jesus makes in **John 10** recall the **Ezekiel 34** prophecy.

a. Jesus says specifically, "I am *the* good shepherd". (not "I am a good shepherd.")

i. **Question:** What "good shepherd" is Jesus referring to here?

1. **Answer:** The one God promised He would provide in the future, in **Ezekiel 34**.

b. Jesus said, "there will be *one* flock, and *one* shepherd".

i. Jesus is very specific, using the number "one" here. This is the same exact word used in most manuscripts of the LXX, where God says, "I shall raise up *one Shepherd*" over His people (**Ezekiel 34:23**).

ii. Jesus reiterates that there will be one (single) shepherd over God's people, but *He adds that there also will be (just) one flock*. God would unite

all His people, Jews and Gentiles together, in the church.

c. Jesus makes a point in His discussion about being the good Shepherd, that He is a Shepherd who will lay down his life for the sheep, but also will have the authority to take it up again.

i. This is just like the good shepherd God promised in **Ezekiel 34:23**, where the Lord said he would "*raise up*" that shepherd.

e. These last four prophecies we just discussed, all of which share in common the statement that the Lord would "raise up" someone significant in the future, are mentioned together by one early Christian writer. This is found in a discussion of prophecies by Cyprian (bishop of the church in Carthage, North Africa, writing c. 250 AD) in his *Treatise No. 12*. Cyprian discusses these four prophecies that spoke of Jesus, who would be:

i. a *king* from David (fulfilling **2 Samuel 7** and **1 Chronicles 17**);

ii. a *prophet* like Moses (fulfilling **Deuteronomy 18**);

iii. a *faithful priest* (fulfilling **1 Samuel 2**); and

iv. the *one shepherd* to rule over God's flock (fulfilling **Ezekiel 34**).

1. (Source: Cyprian, *Treatises of Cyprian*; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 5, pp. 511-512)