

“Jesus as Prophet”

Deut. 18

Series: “The Thread: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament”

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I absolutely LOVE this time of the year especially here at the church. We’ve got our Christmas Spectacular kicking off on Wednesday, and at the conclusion of today’s service we are going to pray for our team and volunteers who have been working so hard to get ready for this incredible production.

The show actually begins on Tuesday (we don’t publicize this one – it’s more of a dry run if you will) and – how cool is this? We make the show available to our widows and some of the nearby retirement and nursing homes. We make it available to families in our special needs ministry – which btw, we are very close to naming a new special needs director that will help oversee this ministry once we open up our brand new facility in the new year.

So many good things happening including this past Wednesday night! If you were not able to make our ribbon cutting of what we are calling “The Lawn”, we sure missed you! I want to thank so many of you who gave and continue to give to our FORWARD initiative to help enhance our facilities. We dedicated this new area that is designed to foster community and fellowship here on our campus.

You will see some b-roll of this past Wednesday and I think we started a new tradition here at Champion Forest in lighting our Christmas Tree. It was such a fun event! So many people came out for it.

And just so you know, beginning today, and each Sunday moving forward the food trucks will be available after services for you to enjoy. So, stay on campus, eat together as families and life groups – let your kids run around and enjoy “The Lawn”.

We are beginning this weekend a special Christmas edition of *The Thread* series. We’ve been looking at how all of the Old Testament points to Jesus, and over the course of the next few weeks, we are going to see how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament roles of prophet, priest and king. I read a quote by **Tony Evans** in my study this week that speaks to the Thread sentiment. He wrote: **“If you miss Jesus, you miss everything. The Old Testament is all about Him. All the sacrifices were in anticipation of Messiah who was to come. The priesthood was all about the high priest who was to come. The prophets were about the prophet who was to come. The King was about the King of kings who was to come.”**

In the Old Testament, the people of God interacted with God primarily through these three avenues...these three offices. You have...and this is the title of the message today:

- **Jesus as Prophet** - we'll look in detail here in just a moment at who a prophet was and what a prophet did – and see if we can't see Jesus as not just a prophet, but as **THE** prophet.
- Jesus as Priest – we'll cover this next week and discover how priests led in worship, was responsible for making sacrifices and carried on the work of the temple – and we'll see how Jesus fulfills this role...this office.
- And then in week three, Dec. 18, we'll see Jesus as King.

Let's start with Jesus as prophet, and let's begin by answering this question: **Who were the prophets?**

If you are familiar with the Bible, you know that it is full of prophets. We actually break the Old Testament up into what is called the “books of prophecy” and you have what we have termed as major and minor prophets.

Now, it's not that the major prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are more important than the minor prophets like Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

By the way, you really should read those prophecy books because one day you are going to get to heaven and you're going to have a conversation with Nahum and he's going to ask you, “What did you think about my book?” You don't want to have a blank stare on your face that day!

They are broken into major and minor prophets mainly because of the size and scope of their writing. ALL are inspired. ALL are important.

It may interest you to know though that there were more prophets than just the ones that wrote books that we consider prophecy. The bible gives the names of 133 prophets and there are many others that prophesied that are not names.

Some of the more famous that named would be men like Abraham and Moses. Think of names like Samuel, Elijah, Elisha – all prophets. The Bible is FULL of what we can consider prophets.

And how did one become a prophet? Well, first: **Prophets were called by God.**

Like this was a prerequisite – you didn't just choose to become a prophet, you had to be called out to be a prophet. Recall the words of God to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 1:4-5 – “Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

God sought people out to make them prophets, they didn't come seeking him and asking to be a prophet. This was not something you interviewed for or turned your resume in to see if you couldn't get the job. No...God called you to this – that's VERY important!

We'll see the penalty in just a moment for presuming upon God and taking the title of a prophet when you weren't one! It doesn't turn out well for that person.

Secondly, not only was a prophet called by God, but: **Prophets were anointed by God.** (at least the mass majority of them were).

This anointing was an anointing with oil and it symbolized the presence of God and calling of God on their life. It represented that they were indeed set apart for a special and specific God-designed task in their life.

Remember, in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came upon people. He didn't live in people until after the resurrection and after Pentecost.

And so, how did you know that a person was set apart by God? They were anointed with oil which represented God's Spirit being upon their life– and incidentally what we see in the scripture is that those set apart in this way were all either: prophets, priests, or kings.

This is who the prophets were. People called by God and anointed by God. Now, let's answer this question: **What did prophets do?**

So, they were called and anointed by God, to do what though? Well, you could group what the prophets did into three general categories:

1. Prophets were mighty in word

241x in the Old Testament we read the words, "the word of the LORD/thus saith the Lord". 221x those words come from the lips of the prophets. The prophets spoke what God told them to speak...they were his mouthpiece.

We call the Bible, the word of God! The writer of Hebrews in **Heb. 1:1** – "**Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets...**"

In the words of scholar, **Richard Belcher** – "**The prophet was God's authorized spokesman.**"

Now, sometimes the prophet spoke words of comfort and sometimes they spoke a word of rebuke. Sometimes they spoke a word of judgment and sometimes they spoke a word of hope. Sometimes what they spoke was a decree...it was a command or an expectation from God. And other times, prophets predicted the future and would speak regarding what was to come! Their ministry created a real sense of expectation.

Illus. Christmas anticipation – this is one of the many things I love about Christmas! The sense of expectation and anticipation. I'm sure if you have small children or grandchildren they are

helping you count down the days to Christmas! It's what our Advent readings are about – it creates a sense of anticipation and expectation over what is to come.

This was the prophet's ministry. They spoke FOR God, and how did you know they were speaking for God? What they said would happen or take place came true!

You want to know what the consequence were if a prophet spoke and what they said didn't happen...what they said didn't come to fruition?

Deut. 18:20-22 – “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.” (death by stoning – duet. 13 “show him no pity, don't spare him or shield him”) ²¹ **And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’— ²² when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”**

There was no playing around when it came to speaking for God. One of the reasons we can believe Jesus is the promised Messiah to come is because of the predictions of the prophets! What they said about Jesus came true!

They prophesied about his entire life, his death and resurrection, but because it's Christmas, let just look and see if what they prophesied came true regarding his birth!

Isaiah 7:14 – (700 years before Jesus would come to earth) – “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Matthew seeing the uniqueness of the Christ child quotes this Isaiah passage as being fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.

Matthew 1:23 – “behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us).

Jeremiah prophesied that the Messiah would come from the lineage of David:

Jeremiah 23:5 – “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”

Isaiah prophesies the same. This was our Advent reading to start the services today:

Isaiah 9:6-7 – “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there

will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

Did this happen? Just read the genealogy of Jesus in Matt. 1 and Luke 3. Jesus is the “Son of David”. What about where the Messiah would be born?

Micah 5:2 – “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.”

Did this prophecy written 7 centuries before it would ever take place come true? Did it happen?

Luke 2:1-5 – “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.”

Prophets were mighty in word – they spoke for God. And therefore whatever they spoke, came true. Secondly:

2. Prophets were mighty in deed

You can’t think or read of the life of a prophet without thinking of a feat they experienced...a miracle they performed. Their messages were accompanied with power! Think of the mighty deeds of some of God’s prophets:

- Moses – calling forth the ten plagues upon Egypt, splitting the Red Sea to deliver God’s people...
- Samuel - calls on God to bring thunder and rain...
- Elijah – raising a widow’s son from the dead and calling down fire from above...
- Elisha – multiplies the widow’s oil and then calls on some bears to maul some children who were making fun of him! (Read that to your kids as a bedtime story tonight!)
- Daniel is rescued from the Lion’s Den...

It wasn’t just miracles though...they were mighty in deed in the way that they lived. Some of their lives WERE the message they were preaching!

Hosea was called to marry Gomer – I mean that’s a bad name, but on top of that, she’s a prostitute! And God tells Hosea to marry her so that he can illustrate to Israel his covenant, steadfast love toward them in the midst of their continual unfaithfulness to him.

Isaiah walked around and preached for three years naked AT the command of God to show that just as he was naked so would be the people that depend on Egypt and not God to deliver them.

I would have loved to hear the prayer life of Isaiah when God put this command through! “Seriously?!” I’m thinking this had to be in the fine print that Isaiah just didn’t read when God came and called him out. I think Isaiah did what we do when we’re filling out long applications – do you agree to this – don’t read it – uh-oh!

Speaking of being mighty in deed, Listen to commentator:

Warren Wiersbe – “And when God’s seers prophesied, they utilized nearly every method to communicate their message. Amos gave direct oracles from God. Malachi used questions and answers. Ezekiel performed bizarre symbolic acts. Haggai preached sermons. And Zechariah employed mysterious signs. The significance of this immensely creative and variegated communication is that it dramatically demonstrated God’s loving desire to communicate with his people. It was never hackneyed, never boring, never inscrutable, never irrelevant. It was always adequate for the time. It was always progressive, revealing more of God and His ways.”

Prophets were mighty in word. They were mighty in deed. Third and finally:

3. Prophets were mighty in suffering

The life of a prophet was a life filled with suffering. When you speak for God to people that don’t want God in their life, typically it’s not going to work out well for you.

And this is certainly the case when talking about the prophets in scripture:

- Ezekiel lost his wife he loved, and God used it as a lesson to the people of God that they would lose what they love most when the city of Jerusalem is destroyed.
- Jeremiah was known as the “weeping prophet” because of the tears he cried due to the rejection he received.
- It is believed by some early church leaders that Isaiah is the one mentioned in Hebrews 11 as being sawn into.

Do you remember what Jesus said regarding the suffering of the prophets before him? Looking out over the city of Jerusalem, he said in:

Matt. 23:37 – “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

Prophets were mighty in word...mighty in deed...and mighty in suffering. So, let’s turn here and answer this question: Does Jesus fulfill the role...fulfill the office of prophet?

This was the question the people of God were asking when Jesus walked the earth. They knew the Old Testament Law backwards and forwards. They KNEW the scripture taught that one day, a prophet like Moses was going to come and deliver them.

Deut. 18:15 – (Moses speaking) - **“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses spoke to God/For God. He performed many mighty feats and led the people out of slavery. He was the great Lawgiver. The scripture says that he spoke to God (Ex. 33:11 – face to face as a man speaks to a friend) from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen.”**

The question everyone wanted to know when Jesus was alive and walking the earth was, “Is Jesus the prophet that Moses was talking about?”

He sure seemed to be. He was mighty in word and deed. Recall the conversation Jesus had with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were kept from recognizing him. It’s right after his death and resurrection and Jesus asks these men, why they are so sad...what’s going on?

Their response: **Luke 24:19** – **“And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people...”**

People looked at the life of Jesus and listened to his teaching and they thought of him as a prophet.

Luke 7:16 – (he raises a widow’s son from the dead much like the prophet Elijah did!) – **“Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has visited his people!”**

When he came into Jerusalem during his Triumphal entry: **Matt. 21:11** – **“And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”**

When Peter preached in Acts 3, do you remember what happens? God heals a lame man through the ministry of Peter and John, and of course a crowd gathers when they see this – so Peter starts preaching!

And as he preaches, he just begins connecting the dots for all these Jewish people to hear that have come to the temple that day.

Acts 3:17-26 – **“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. ²² Moses said,**

‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.

²³ And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’ ²⁴ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ ²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”

There’s NO doubt about it! Jesus, like the prophets before was mighty in word. I mean, come on...he didn’t just speak the word of God, he WAS the word of God.

John 1:1, 14 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Here’s a great quote I read this week in a book by a few different theology professors called, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel’s King*:

“Evidence of Jesus as prophet is threefold. Jesus recognizes himself to be a prophet when he says, “a prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own house (Mark 6:4). Jesus realizes that others perceive him to be a prophet. The Samaritan woman muses, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet” (John 4:19). Jesus reacts like a prophet when a disciple draws attention to the temple. Jesus predicts that “not one stone will be left on another.” (Mark 13:2) and even weeps over the future destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44). Yet Jesus was more than a prophet.”

See, Jesus was a prophet...no question! He was mighty in word. He was mighty in deed – performed miracle after miracle – healed people, fed multitudes, casted out demons, raised the dead.

And speaking of death, just look at the cross...the death of Jesus – he was mighty in suffering too, just like all the other prophets that came before him. He was a prophet. But as the quote I just read mentioned, he was MORE than just a prophet.

Do you remember the conversation he had with his disciples at Caesarea Philippi?

Matt. 16:13-16 – “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

You, Jesus are the Messiah! THE “ANOINTED ONE” – that’s what Messiah means!

Peter in this moment is confessing his faith...and it is the confession of faith that the Church is built upon - that Jesus while a prophet – he fulfills the role and office of prophet...he is so much more. He is the Christ, the son of the living God!

There is SO MUCH here! I wish I could go deeper and deeper into this with you! We could explore this together for a solid month and still have plenty to discover – that’s how rich, “Jesus as Prophet” is! We’re just out of time today.

So, how do we land this plane? Here’s what I want to do, and I am going to do this each of the next three weeks in closing out the message. I’m going to give you in application one word – it’s a Christmas word and I hope that as I give you this word, it will help you to think about all week the implications of this message.

Here’s the Christmas word of application to this message, Jesus as Prophet: **Wonder**

Isn’t that a GREAT Christmas word?! You see it on kid’s faces this time of the year...just come to the Spectacular and watch kids as they see some of the sites and sounds of Christmas. I heard it at our Christmas Tree lighting on Wednesday. We lit the tree, and I heard a little 5 or 6 year old say, “How does it do that?!”

That’s wonder! Sometimes as we get older...when we’ve been there...and we’ve done that...and we’ve seen that over and over...sometimes, we lose our wonder.

And here is what I want you to think about this week as it relates to Jesus as prophet. I want you to think about how he is mighty in word. Think about how God has spoken to you through his word in the past and how even now, he is speaking to us ALL through his word – Wonder at that!

Wonder at how Jesus was mighty in deed – just read the gospels. Wonder at the fact that he touched the lepers...that he healed the sick...that he lifted up the lowly and broken-hearted and gave his best to the despised and downtrodden.

Wonder at how Jesus was mighty in suffering. Think about how the son of God (Phil. 2 “emptied himself”) and went from the manger to the cross – and he did this for you!

Jesus as prophet. Wonder long enough and you know what it will lead to? Worship. Wonder always leads to worship.

Would you pray with me?

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.