

## **Sermon for Advent Midweek 1**

**Text: Acts 3:17-24**

**Preached on 12-05-2007**

### **Introduction:**

Tell me, what do you think of when you hear the word “prophet”? No, I don’t mean the kind of “profit” that toy companies are so interested in making this Christmas season. I mean prophet, as in P-R-O-P-H-E-T. Do you think of some guy with a gray beard, dressed in a flowing robe, holding a scroll in his hand, and babbling on about how, “The End is Near”? Or maybe you think of someone who has the uncanny ability to pick the winning team four out of five times or who seems to always time the stock market just right. Or maybe you think of the psychics you see on TV who seem to be able to tell the future and claim to communicate with the dead. The word “prophet” probably conjures up different pictures in different people’s minds. And yet, when asked, “What do you think of when you hear the word prophet,” I wonder how many of us think of a little baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger. Today is our first of three Midweek Advent services in which we will be concentrating on the fact that...

### **Series Theme: Christ, the Savior, is Coming...**

In the Old Testament there were no radios, TVs, or internet. So God sent out men called prophets to tell the people the Good News about the coming Savior. Ironically, Jesus spoke that same Good News. That is why we say...

### **Theme: Christ, the Savior, is Coming as Prophet!**

#### **Part I: A prophet who speaks like the others**

#### **Part II: A prophet who speaks as God**

#### **Part I: A prophet who speaks like the others**

The text we have before us is part of a message that the Apostle Peter delivered to a crowd of Jews that had gathered after he had healed a crippled beggar. The people were astonished that this fisherman from Galilee was able to perform such a miraculous healing. But Peter said to them, **“Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ...It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through Him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see” (Acts 3:12, 16).** Because of this miracle, people were now standing up and taking notice. They were listening. Peter used this as an opportunity to

point them to Jesus, the very same Jesus whom they handed over to be crucified.

He announced, **“Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders” (v. 17)**. Don’t misunderstand. Peter wasn’t excusing the actions of the Jews. Rather, he was simply acknowledging that they obviously did not understand who Jesus really was. From that point on, Peter attempted to show these Jews that Jesus was the Prophet foretold (or talked about) in their own Old Testament Scriptures. He quoted Moses and told them, **“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people” (v. 22)**. In other words, God was promising that one day He was going to send a prophet into the world who would be similar to the great prophet Moses, as well as all the other great Old Testament prophets.

**Application:**

Now maybe that raises the question, “Exactly what is a prophet?” We said earlier that some people think of a prophet as someone who can foretell the future. But really, that’s not God’s definition. In the pages of Holy Scripture a prophet is someone who speaks for God or someone who relays a message from God to man. Sometimes God used His prophets to expound on events that had taken place in the past. Other times God used His prophets to offer a revelation concerning the present. And yes, there were times when God used His prophets to speak of future events. Down through the centuries God’s people have recognized all these prophecies as instances of God speaking to His people through His chosen representatives, the apostles and prophets.

What a blessing it is to be able to gather here today and say after each Scripture reading, “This is the Word of the Lord”, rather than, “Hummm! I’m waiting for a message here. I think it’s coming in now. I hope it’s from God.” My friends, if we are looking for a divine revelation or a message from above, then we need to look no further than right here (in the Bible). The prophets of old did not write their messages from God on Post-It Notes to be discarded or forgotten as quickly as they were written down. No! The prophets of old recognized they were recording God’s timeless truths. The truth talked about the most was what they all wrote about concerning Jesus. Prophecy after prophecy stated that *Christ, the Savior, is Coming!* The words Jesus spoke were in complete agreement with what the prophets of old talked about. That makes Jesus a prophet who speaks like the others.

**Transition:**

It still must be said that even though the prophets of old were faithful messengers of God, they still had one major limitation. Not one of them was able to speak by his own authority. All the true prophets of old spoke for God. There was only one prophet in the history of the world who spoke as God. Let's turn our attention to...

**Part II: A prophet who speaks as God**

Speaking as God, Jesus gives us a window into the heart and mind of God Himself. On the one hand Jesus says that God considers us to be incredibly selfish, spoiled, lazy, and arrogant people. We are guilty of hurting others with the words we use as well as with the words we refuse to use. We have proven ourselves to be untrustworthy, deceitful, and just plain bullheaded at times. We have lusted over members of the opposite sex and coveted over things that God does not want us to have. God knows all these sins and more. Jesus, speaking as God, says that you and I deserve to be punished for each and every offense. From this we know that God is a just God who hates sin and promises to punish the sinner to Hell.

Fortunately for you and me, Jesus wants us to know more about God than He's just. Jesus also wants us to know that God is gracious and merciful. In spite of our repeated sins, God still loved us enough to send us Jesus. In Christ's perfect life and innocent death, God has declared you and me, and in fact, the whole world to be free from the guilt and punishment that we so justly deserve. Let's face it. That's mighty Good News! Even though Jesus certainly took time to preach the Law, the real heart and core of His preaching was the Gospel, the Good News message that tells us our sins ARE forgiven and that Heaven IS ours. That's a message that Jesus, as Prophet, has to speak to the world.

**Application:**

Think about what that means for our lives today! As you and I stumble through the worries and struggles of life; as we wonder, "Man, why is this happening to me? What does God expect of me? Where do I stand in relation to Him?" Jesus steps forward and says, "You don't have to wonder about God's concern for you. You don't have to wonder about where you stand in relation to Him either. I'll tell you just how much God cares for you and exactly what He has done to make you His own." Jesus, speaking as God, tells us everything we need to know for our

forgiveness and salvation. He does so right here, in His Holy Word. It's the same Word He spoke as the heavens and earth were formed by His command. It's the same Word spoken in every language (or tongue) on the day of Pentecost. It's the same Word that penetrated our sinful, rebellious hearts on our Baptism Day.

The only question now is, "How are you and I going to respond to that Good News message?" The Apostle Peter has some words of advice for us. Quoting Moses the prophet he says, "**The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything He tells you**" (v. 22). Listen to everything Jesus tells us! That's how God wants us to respond to His gracious act of sending Christ, the Messiah, into the world. Sometimes that means repenting of a sin that we've been holding in our hearts for a long time. Or maybe for you it means taking to heart God's promise that He will always be with you, even if someone you dearly love no longer can be. We trust in God's love and concern for us in all circumstances, no matter how unfortunate or unfair they appear to be, because we recognize Jesus as a prophet who speaks as God.

**Conclusion:**

We have just entered into a new Church Year. Very soon we will be beginning a new year as well. People want to know what the New Year will bring. So many turn to what are known as prophets. They are also known as mediums, spiritists, and fortunetellers. But the LORD warns us to stay away from these so-called prophets (**Deuteronomy 8:10-12**). No matter how good they may appear to be, they have nothing good to offer our souls. Jesus, however, does! He came to do more than just die for us. He also came to speak to us. When He speaks, He speaks the very words of God. So during this Advent season, as we peer into that manger once again, see more than just a baby lying there. See (1) a prophet who speaks like the others. But also see (2) a prophet who speaks as God. Yes, *Jesus, the Savior, is Coming!* But He is coming as Prophet! Amen!