

Title: The Prophet
Date: 3/16/25
Subject: Jesus is the Prophet who fully communicates God's message.
Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4, 10; 3:1

Spring has sprung and as the poem by Tennyson goes, "In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of... baseball." I know, it's supposed to be love, but sometimes the warming days, the chirping birds and prospect of flowers bursting from the earth don't exactly work their magic on young minds.

Spring, especially since it's the season that contains Easter, is a wonderful time to fall in love... with Jesus. I know, the phrase "fall in love" isn't the best description of the way we should approach love. How about this? Spring, the Easter season, is a fantastic time to contemplate the love of Jesus and love him in return.

Last week we saw that Jesus is better and superior to Old Testament prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, any other person, leader of belief system, the entire system itself, and everything there is. Because of who he is and the salvation he offers, we're to encourage one another to be steadfast in our faith.

This morning we'll look at one of the art gallery pictures of Jesus from Hebrews. It's his office as prophet. Last week, in correlation with Jesus being the superior prophet, I briefly mentioned he is the ultimate spokesperson for God. He comes directly from the presence of God. He is the word, not a word, but The Word. His message is greater than and superior to what came from the forefathers and prophets. We're going to elaborate much more deeply this morning.

We'll begin with the same passage we started with last week - Hebrews 1. Read Hebrews 1:1-3.

The word prophet comes from a word meaning "to bubble forth." A prophet is one who pours forth the message of another. The over 130 named prophets and those unnamed in the Bible poured forth the message of God, spoke for him and announced his word. They were his spokesmen, messengers, proclaimers, communicators. Being a prophet didn't have so much to do with foretelling the future but forthtelling.

Prophets of the Old Testament covered the alphabet from A-Z - Abel to Zechariah (Matt 23:34-35, Luke 11:50, 51). Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, was the first prophet. We have no recorded words nor writings from him. His prophecy comes through the blood sacrifice he brought before the Lord. This pointed to the ultimate sacrifice Jesus would give. Abel's sacrifice is noted in Hebrews 11:4: "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead."

The second reference in Hebrews to Abel is in a comparison to Jesus (12:24). Jesus' blood speaks a better word than Abel's blood. This time it isn't the blood of the sacrifices Abel brought but his own blood. It cried out for justice and revenge. In contrast, Jesus' blood declares forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

The prophet Zechariah, not the father of John the Baptist, did write down a message from God. It's the next to last book of the OT. He foretells a lot about the Messiah: the Anointed One/Messiah/Christ would

come as a human (6:12; 13:7), be rejected and betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (11:12-13), be crucified, struck down by the “sword” of the Lord (13:7), be a priest (6:13), be the king (6:13; 9:9; 14:9, 16) who would come in glory (14:4) to reign (9:10; 14) and establish an kingdom of enduring peace and prosperity (3:10; 9:9, 10).

There were other prophets with A and Z names – Amos and Zephaniah. Between the A's and Z's were prophets with major roles and those with minor roles, those who composed big books like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and those who didn't write at all, those like Elijah and Elisha, towering infernos who dominated pages and years of biblical story and others who were a brief flickering candle.

All of the prophets played their role of preparing the way for Christ's coming. They probably weren't aware of the meaning of everything God was revealing and they were forthtelling. Zechariah was looking forward over 500 years to the time of Christ. Most of the other prophets were looking from a greater distance.

Here are some of the messages from the OT prophets – *Moses (Acts 3:22, from Deut 18:15, 18): 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. Micah 5:2: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, 7: The Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. Jeremiah 23:5, 6: “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land...This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our righteousness.”*

It wasn't all upbeat as the Son of God was shown as the suffering servant who would pay a tremendous cost to accomplish his mission: *“his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness...He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth...he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned to grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide*

the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 52:14, 53:2-12).

The last message the Lord gave to an OT prophet was Malachi: “Behold, I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple—the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight—see, He is coming,” says the LORD of Hosts (Malachi 3:1)

An NIV Study Bible note says, “The OT revelation was fragmentary and occasional, lacking fullness and finality” (note Hebrews 1:1). We’re told in 1 Peter 1:10-12: *“concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.”*

Malachi foretold the coming of the Messenger - Jesus and the Messenger’s messenger - John the Baptist. John, the forerunner, functioned as an extension of the OT prophet. He introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). He told the crowds he wasn't worthy to untie the sandals of the Christ (Luke 3:16).

The New Testament position: “the gospel he (God) promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:1-4). Peter in the book of Acts declared that “God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer” and “All the prophets testify about him (Jesus Christ) that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 3:18, 10:43).

A few weeks ago in our study of 2 Peter we heard: “that we have the word of the prophets made more certain” (2 Peter 1:19). This was prefaced by Peter’s recollection of God the Father speaking about his Son, declaring his love for the Son, saying he was well pleased with the Son and that he and the other disciples were eyewitnesses of Jesus’ majesty (2 Peter 1:16, 17). The communication of God's message through Jesus was clear, not fragmented, but full and final. Jesus pieces things together into a cohesive whole. He fleshed out the story.

Jesus’ viewpoint. He told the crowds: “I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it” (Matthew 13:17). He told them they'd be blessed because their eyes see and their ears hear but they need to be like good soil that produces a high yielding crop by hearing the word and understanding it.

Jesus told two downhearted disciples after the crucifixion, and the resurrection, but they weren't yet aware of the resurrection: “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” and beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24: 25-

27). Later he told all the disciples “Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms” (Luke 24:44).

Jesus - by virtue of his person, his position and his power - has the right to the last word about God and his plan. It's the implied thought of v. 2 – “but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.”

The last word isn't always the best word. It could be simply pulling the plug because the TV show keeps losing viewers and it was time to call it quits. It may merely be the latest word, the newest word, but not necessarily an improved word.

The message from and in Jesus Christ is the latest word, the newest word, the best word, the complete word – the last word. He is the fulfillment of all to which the Old Testament pointed. With the OT prophets, communication was relay – God to the prophet to other people. The revelation that came through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is superior because it's direct communication from God to people. There is nothing left for any other prophet to say because Jesus said it all. He is the mic drop moment.

What did Jesus communicate? The main point was that he was God. He communicated this through his words and the miracles which supported his words. He told people to believe what he was saying or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles (John 10:38, 14:11). He declared: I am the bread of life that provides eternal life (John 6:35,48,51), I am the light of the world that provides the light of life (John 8:12), I am the gate and whoever enters through me will be saved (John 10:9), I am the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11), I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; And whoever lives and believes in me will never die (John 11:25, 26), I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6), I am the vine; You are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit (John 15:5).

Jesus was more direct in a conversation with those who supposedly were knowledgeable about spiritual matters. They didn't like what Jesus was saying and declared he was demon possessed. Jesus spoke about his connection with the Father and concluded the contentious discussion by declaring he was God by saying the words I AM. The people should have been jumping out of their skins at the news that God had acted and that the promised one was present. Instead, thoroughly infuriated, they picked up stones to stone him to death.

It wasn't the time for Jesus to give his life. He hid himself and slipped away. He said he received the command from his Father that he would have the authority to lay it down, the authority to take it up and that no one would take his life from him, but he would lay it down of his own accord (John 10:18).

Jesus came to make the Father known. He taught: if you really knew me, you'd know my Father as well. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father is in me (John 14:7-11). On this last night on earth before his death, Jesus prayed to His Father, *“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of this world... I gave them the words you gave me... May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me... I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them”* (John 17:6, 8, 23, 26).

Hebrews uses other terms that fit with Jesus being the prophet. Read 2:10. A later verse echoes with Jesus referred to as the author and perfecter of our faith (12:2). Jesus is the author of salvation and our faith as He is the writer telling the story. The idea of author includes being the captain, pioneer and leader. During one of Peter's sermons in Acts, he referred to Jesus as the "author of life" (Acts 3:15). He's the one who wrote the book on life, how people may attain life - this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent (John 17:3).

Read 3:1. Jesus is identified as apostle and high priest. Jesus as the perfect high priest is next week. This is the only place where Jesus Christ is referred to as apostle. The meaning of apostle is one who is sent.

Jesus frequently referred to him being sent by the Father. Many of these came on Jesus' last night on earth where a half dozen times he said he was sent by the Father. In other places he said the one who receives him receives the one who sent him (Matt 10:40), those who listen to or reject him listen to or reject the one who sent him (Luke 10:16), those who believe in him don't believe in him only but also in the one who sent him and those who look at him see the one who sent him as he came so people wouldn't stay in darkness (John 12:44-46) and whoever accepts him accepts the one who sent him (John 13:20). His mission was to bring God to us so he could bring us to God. One of the names about Jesus we relish is Emmanuel, God with us.

Jesus also was the prophet because he gave us the example we are to follow. He talked about his love: "Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). That's exactly what he did. He demonstrated his selfless love by giving his life to die on the cross as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins. We are to love as he has loved us (John 15:12).

Application point. We don't call ourselves prophets, but we're all in that position as we are proclaimers, messengers, spokespeople and communicators from God. We're to tell those who don't have a saving relationship with God that they can have one and how to get it. We tell them the gospel, the good news - Jesus Christ lived a perfect life that was pleasing to God in every way, died on the cross as the sacrifice for the sins of people, and rose from the dead to demonstrate his power. To enter the saving relationship with God a person must place their trust in Jesus Christ. Jesus has passed the microphone to us.

Read 2:1-4. The messages given by angels refer to their part in bringing God's instructions to Moses at Mount Sinai (Deut 33:2). When Stephen defended his belief in Christ as the Savior, he referenced angels speaking to Moses (Acts 7: 8, 53). He also quoted Moses: "God will send you a prophet like me from your own people" (Acts 7:37) to bolster his position that Jesus was the prophet.

If the message brought by angels should be listened and adhered to, how much more the message brought by the Son of God. The question is asked in v. 3, "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?" The answer is: it's impossible to escape. The plea is to not drift away from the greater revelation given by Christ. We must pay more careful attention to what we've heard through the perfect God/Man who performed the perfect work of bringing salvation on the cross.