

“The Meaning Of The Manger”
The Office Of Christ
As Prophet

Introduction:

1. On The Night Jesus Was Born In Bethlehem:
 - His Birth Was Announced By An Angel From Heaven:
 - To A Group Of Shepherds Nearby!
 - And In Luke 2:8-11 We Read:
 - “And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. / And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. / And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. / For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord!”
2. For The Next 4 Sunday Before Christmas:
 - I Would Like For Us To Look Together At:
 - The “Meaning Of The Manger” And Explore How:
 - When Jesus Was Born:
 - Not Only Did He Come To Be:
 - “A Savior” - As The Angel Said To The Shepherds:
 - And Which Is What His Name, “Jesus”, Means!
 - But He Also Came As:
 - “Christ The Lord!”
 - “Christ” Is The Greek Word For The Hebrew Title:
 - “Messiah!”
 - And This Title Simply Describes Jesus As:
 - “The Anointed One!”
 - The One Chosen / Promised / Sent By God To Deliver His People!
 - And So - When Jesus Came As “Christ The Lord”:
 - He Also Came To Complete:
 - Several Roles / Offices:
 - That In Themselves Pointed To Him & His Coming!
 - God Promised His People Someone:
 - Who Would Fulfill Three Offices:
 - That Most Of The Time Would Only Be Found Separately!
 - But There Would Come One:
 - Who Would Fulfill All Three Of These Offices:
 - And Would Do So Perfectly & Completely & Be The One Qualified To Redeem & Save His People From Their Sins!
 - 3. The Three Roles / Offices Are:
 - Prophet / Priest / King!
 - And I Would Like Us To Look At Each Of These More Closely:
 - Over The Next Several Sunday Nights!
 - So Tonight - We Will Look At:
 - The Office Of Christ:
 - As Prophet! First We See:
 - 1. ***The Purpose Of The Prophet:***
 - In Genesis 3:8 - We Read That - Immediately After The Fall:
 - After Adam & Eve Disobeyed The Clear Command Of God:
 - “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day!”
 - This Was Likely Their Common Experience:
 - Before The Fall!
 - There Was A Real, Intimate Fellowship Between God & Man!
 - God Would Speak With Them:
 - And They Could Speak With God!
 - And The Will Of Adam & Eve Was In Complete Harmony With The Will Of God!
 - It’s Hard For Us To Even Imagine:

- What That Must Have Been Like!
 - But It Was Paradise! To Hear The Word Of God Directly From Himself!
- But What Happened When Adam & Eve Sinned?
 - Their Immediate Reaction Was To:
 - Cover Themselves & To Hide From God And His Word!
 - Which Is Why It Continues In Genesis 3:8-10 - “And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. / And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? / And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself!”
 - Adam & Eve Were Afraid & Didn’t Even Want To Hear:
 - The Voice Of The Lord!
 - This Is A Very Common Reaction For Sinners, When It Comes To The Voice Of God!
- See This In Exodus 20:18-19:
 - When God Was Personally & Audibly:
 - Giving The 10 Commandments To His People:
 - “And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. / And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die!”
 - Sinners Don’t Want To Hear God Speak!
 - But What Did God Do?
 - In His Grace, He Accommodated This Weakness In Man:
 - And Gave Them His Prophets!
- And So - The Purpose Of The Prophet:
 - Is To Speak The Words Of God:
 - For Man To Hear!
 - Instead Of Withholding His Word:
 - Which God Knew We Needed:
 - If There Was To Be Any Hope For Us!
 - After All - Romans 10:17 - “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God!”
 - He Continued To Share His Word:
 - Through Prophets!
 - And The Principle That A Faithful Prophet Would Live By Was This:
 - “The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak!” (Numbers 2:38 - Balaam)
- Sometimes The Prophet:
 - Would Serve As A “Foreteller” - Which Is What We Usually Think Of:
 - When We Think Of A Prophet!
 - Someone Who Can Predict The Future!
- But Most Of The Time The Prophet:
 - Would Serve As A “Foreteller” - Which Meant:
 - He Simply Was The Mouthpiece:
 - For God To Man!
 - And So - From A Point Very Early On:
 - In The History Of Mankind - We Find:

2. ***The Provision Of The Prophet:***

- The First Person Called A Prophet In The Bible:
 - Is Abraham!
 - In Fact, In Genesis 20:6-7, God Himself Describes Abraham As A Prophet To Abimelech In A Dream - “And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. / Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet!”
 - But Were There Any Other Prophets Before Abraham?
- The First Person Who Was Described As A Prophet:
 - By Jesus Himself Is – Abel!
 - Luke 11:49-51 - “Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles,

and some of them they shall slay and persecute: / That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; / From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation!"

- And So - From Nearly The Very Beginning:

- God Has Provided Us With His Prophets!

- And There Was A Long Line Of Prophets:

- After That!

- Men Of Different Temperaments!

- Men Of Different Ages!

- Men Of Different Backgrounds!

- And Even Some Women:

- Like Miriam / Deborah / Anna!

- The Prophet Amos:

- Was A Herdsman!

- The Prophet Elisha:

- Was A Plowman!

- The Prophet Daniel:

- Was A Government Administrator!

- But They Were All:

- Appointed By God!

- Like The Prophet Samuel:

- Who Was Just A Boy:

- When God Called & Appointed Him To Be His Prophet!

- 1 Samuel 3:1-4 - "And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. / And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; / And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; / That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I!"

- And Then In 3:10-11 - "And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. / And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle!"

- Every Prophet Was Called & Appointed By God:

- At Different Times In Their Lives!

- And Under Different Circumstances!

- But When They Were Called, They All Received:

- Authority From God!

- Like The Prophet Jeremiah:

- To Whom God Said In Jeremiah 1:5-10 - "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. / Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. / But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. / Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. / Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. / See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant!"

- Whenever A Prophet Spoke For God:

- It Was As If God Had Spoken Himself!

- And Man Would Be Responsible For What He Heard!

- However - All Of These Prophets Were Limited!

- Their Messages Were Limited!

- They Only Spoke The Words God Gave Them:

- For A Specific People!

- At A Specific Place!

- For A Specific Time!

- Although Some Of Their Words:

- Were Recorded For Us:

- In The Inspired Word Of God!
- None Of Them Gave:
 - God's Complete & Final Word To Man!
- Their Ministries Were Limited!
 - Every Prophet Lived Their Lives:
 - And Then Died:
 - Except For Two:
 - Enoch & Elijah!
 - And Many Were Faithful In Their Ministry:
 - Until The Day They Died!
 - But They All Still Struggled:
 - With Their Own Fallen Nature & Their Own Sin!
 - Just Like The Prophet Elijah:
 - James 5:17 - "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are!"
- All Of The Prophets Came & Went:
 - And So We Find Given To Us:
 - Through The Prophets & Through God's Word:

3. ***The Promise Of The Prophet:***

- A Prophet Who Would Not:
 - Be Limited:
 - In His Ministry Nor In His Message!
- The Prophet Moses:
 - As He Was "Forth-Telling" God's Word:
 - Through The Law In Deuteronomy:
 - Shared This Special Message With God's People:
 - Deuteronomy 18:15 - "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken!"
 - Another Prophet!
 - A Special Prophet!
 - Appointed By God!
 - Given Authority From God!
 - And - "Unto Him Ye Shall Hearken!"
 - His Word Will Be Effectual:
 - In The Lives Of God's People!
- And So - The People Of God:
 - From That Time Forth:
 - Looked For This New Prophet!
 - A Prophet Who Would Bear A Character Like That Of Moses:
 - But Would Even Surpass Moses In His Ministry!
 - Because How Many People Faithfully Heard & Heeded Moses' Messages From God?
 - The Messiah – The Anointed One Of God:
 - Would Be The Preeminent & The Perfect Prophet!
- And We Know This Applies To Jesus:
 - Because In The Apostle Peter's Message:
 - On Pentecost - He Says:
 - In Acts 3:18-24 - "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. / Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; / And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: / Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. / 22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. / 23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. / 24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days!"
- And So - When Jesus Was Born In Bethlehem:
 - He Came To Fulfill This Promise!

- And So We Find In Jesus:

4. The Perfection Of The Prophet:

- Because: Jesus Is The Forthright Word Of God!

- Not Only Did He *Speak*:

- The Word Of God Directly!

- He *Is* The Word Of God:

- In Human Form!

- John 1:1, 14 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!" / "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth!"

- And So - As The Perfect Prophet:

- Whenever We Listen To The Words & Even The Work:

- Of Jesus – We Are Listening To The Voice Of God Himself!

- Jesus Is The Faithful Word Of God!

- John 15:14-15 - "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. / Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you!"

- And So - As The Perfect Prophet:

- Jesus Never Held Anything Back!

- And That Is Why:

- Jesus Is The Final Word Of God!

- Hebrews 11:1 - "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, / Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds!"

- "As Prophet, Jesus pronounced an end to all our sin. In the Old Testament, the prophet was the mouthpiece of God to the people. In fact, the prophet often prefaced his words by saying, "Thus says the Lord." As God's mouthpiece, the prophet spoke the words of indictment against the people for their sin (Isa. 1:4) and called them to repentance (v. 18). The prophet pronounced the forgiveness and pardon of God (Isa. 40:1-2). Jesus, as the final and sufficient Prophet, has done all of these for us. He came not just proclaiming the Word of God; He is the Word of God (John 1:1). He came to the world because of sin (Matt. 1:21). He proclaimed our need to repent and believe on Him (Mark 1:15). And He proclaimed our pardon and forgiveness for sin (Col. 1:14)!" (Anthony Carter)

- And So - Since Jesus Is The Perfect Prophet:

- What Are We To Do?

Conclusion:

1. Hebrews 2:1 - "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip!"

- We Need To Listen To His Word:

- And "Give The More Earnest Heed!"

2. And So When Jesus Was Born In The Manger:

- It Was To Fulfill This Office / Role / Ministry:

- Of Prophet – Completely & Perfectly! And He Did!

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