

Jesus, Our Prophet

Hebrews 1:1–4; Deuteronomy 18:15–22; John 1:18

This morning we begin a 3-part series focusing on the 3 offices the Lord Jesus holds, or completes into eternity: Prophet, Priest, and King. In each office we will see the Old Testament foreshadowing, in a very imperfect way, the perfect completion of each office in Christ. Our foundation text this morning is **Hebrews 1:1–4**. But before we get there, turn to **Deuteronomy 18:15–20**. As I said, we will begin with the types of the Old Testament, and then move to perfect in Christ. So in Deuteronomy 18 we see the prophet Moses delivering God’s word concerning all the prophets who would temporarily fill the office, and he tells the Hebrew children about the coming perfect prophet who will perfectly reveal God. Let’s read from Deuteronomy 18, then we will turn to Hebrews 1, which is where we began in the Call to Worship.

Deuteronomy 18:15–20 — “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— ¹⁶ just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ ¹⁷ And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. ²⁰ 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.’ [*Now, our foundation text:*]

Hebrews 1:1–3a — Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

PRAY — Lord, you call us to follow you out of darkness into light, life, and blessing. Let us hear.

God Has Spoken. Remarkable, isn’t it, that eternal God, who was, and is, and is to come, would speak to finite creature made of dust who shake their fists in his face asserting that they are in fact god. So when we understand the reality of who we are, just the fact that he speaks is astonishing. What does it tell us about God that he speaks?

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Yesterday morning as we gathered for set up all of the children from one family were so mom could get a breather and get some of her own homework done. Now, let me say at the front end, I love it when your kids come in. I love to hear them call my name — or more accurately yell my name. It's a sweet sound that melts my soft-touch heart. One of the children here yesterday came in the door speaking. A lot. He told me everything about the activities of the night before, everything he had experienced playing monopoly, and about breakfast, and everything else that was happening in his life. He told me all kinds of things he wanted me to know. He told me things that his parents didn't want me to know. He told me things that I didn't want to know. Why did he tell me all that? He loves me and wants to share his life with me. He delights to be known. Why does God speak? He loves us and wants to share his life with us. He delights to be known for his glory and our good.

We find ourselves back at this fundamental truth over and over. God is a personal God who calls us to a personal relationship in which he takes the initiative to make himself known to us, his creation, that we might worship and serve him, which is for his glory and for our good. As we know him he shares his life with us, and we are satisfied by him.

God spoke in various ways

The Bible divides human history into two epochs: The former days, and the last days. The incarnation of Christ is the great dividing line between the former days and the last days, and we have been in the last days since Christ came. We may think of the "last days" as being the time immediately preceding 2nd coming of Christ. God's word, however doesn't draw the circle quite that small. The last days are the days on this side of Christ's atoning cross. But I'm getting ahead of myself... Let's think about how God spoke in the former days. **v. 1** says he spoke in many ways. What were some of those ways?

General Revelation (Psalm 19:1–2)	Dreams	Visions	Hand writing on a wall		
Urim and Thumim	Prophets	Donkeys	His Law	Angels	Etc.

The writer of Hebrews focuses on prophets. They were certainly greatest way that God spoke. What is a prophet? A prophet was a man chosen and appointed by God to be his spokesman. In the days before the canon of Scripture was complete God would let people know what he was doing through his prophet spokesmen. They would both foretell what God was going to do in the future, and forth-tell God's truth and instruction for the present. As we read in Deuteronomy 18, God would put his words in the prophet's mouth and he was to speak precisely what God said with no variation. Other passages instruct God people to kill someone who claims to be a prophet 100% right all the time. An

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accuracy record of 99.9% would get you stoned because God is not 0.1% in error. They were to represent exactly what God said, and they were to do exactly what God said.

1 Kings 13 records the account of a prophet from Judah who faithfully delivered a message of judgment to King Jeroboam. Message delivered. Check. God had told him he was to return home by a different route without eating or drinking. On his way home, he was enticed by someone who said, "Ah, the Lord actually gave me some different instructions for you." So the prophet listened and went with the man and had lunch. But because he was deceived by a man and did not obey what God said, God appointed a lion to eat the prophet. Do you think God took seriously the responsibility and privilege he gave to those who spoke for him? Why so strict? Why such a monstrous penalty for the slightest deviation? Because he is God. He is holy. There is no shadow of sin or imperfection in him. He was speaking to make himself known in reality, not have a false notion created about him that would cause people to think he was other than who he was and is. The destiny of eternal souls depends on knowing and responding to God as he is, so 100% accuracy was required.

Let's focus for the next few minutes on one prophet out of many we could consider. Let's look at the prophet Moses for a moment, who was the human author of God's words in Deuteronomy 18. Moses said that God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. Moses is foretelling that God will send another prophet who would be like Moses. He was foretelling the coming of Christ. In Acts 3 Peter confirms this is Jesus. The job Moses did imperfectly, Jesus fulfilled perfectly. Let's make a quick overview of the major events of the Moses' life from the time God appointed him at the burning bush in Exo. 3.

- At the burning bush he is appointed by God. God has seen the affliction of his people who are in slavery. He knows their sufferings and he is coming down to deliver them out of slavery and bring them to the Promised Land to serve and worship God. Moses hears and ultimately obeys.
- Next, in the court of Pharaoh, Moses goes and tells Pharaoh exactly what God has said. He bears God's message with complete integrity, saying this is who God is, and this is what he is going to do.
- After wonders and signs and plagues, Moses ultimately leads God's people out of their slavery.
- He gives the Word of God, the 10 commandments, to the people.
- He intervenes for Israel when God was justly about to destroy them for their rebellion.

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- Finally he leads them out of the wilderness into the good and broad Promised Land flowing milk and honey where they will be satisfied by God and will worship him.

Oh, wait. He doesn't quite get that last check box done, does he? That's because the human type that foreshadows the perfect Prophet could never quite measure up. In fact, why were there so many prophets? Because they kept dying. Moses died by God's judgment because he had a fit of anger that misrepresented God. He brought down God's name before his people, and God upheld his own name at Moses' expense. Prophets must accurately represent Holy God or God will prove himself.

Next week the Call to Worship and a focal point in the sermon will instruct us why there are no more sacrifice-making priests. Spoiler Alert: It's because the perfect sacrifice has been completed. But why are there no more prophets? Because the perfect and final telling of who God is, what he is doing, and what has said has been completed in Christ and no more prophets are needed. This is point of the little sentence with massive consequence that closes the prologue of the Gospel of John. At the beginning of John 1 we are told that Jesus is the Word of God incarnate. At the end of the prologue, John 1:18, we are told this glorious truth: Jesus has made everything about God perfectly plain.

So when we glue together that the coming perfect prophet would be like Moses, that he will make God perfectly known, we develop a portrait of Jesus, our Prophet. Let's compare.

As God saw the Hebrew children suffering in slavery under the tyranny of Pharaoh and determined to deliver them through Moses, so God saw all of his children enslaved in death-producing sin and determined to deliver them through Christ. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:3-5) Jesus leads us out of sin's slavery.

As Moses faithfully did what God said and took God's message to Pharaoh, so Jesus, the faithful witness (Rev. 1:5) does what the Father said to do, and says and what the Father says to say.

John 5:19 — So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

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John 12:49–50 — For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

Jesus perfectly kept all the Law of God, doing all that God said, so that we may have his perfect obedience imputed to us by faith.

After signs and wonders, Moses calls God’s people to leave Egypt’s slavery and follow him to meet God at the mountain. After signs and miracles, Jesus calls his people to follow him and escape sin’s slavery through his substitutionary death. He cancels sin’s debt for those who follow him in belief. But as the prophet superior to Moses, he doesn’t lead his people out to meet God somewhere, he is God come to meet them receive the worship he is due.

Romans 6:4–6 — We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Colossians 1:13–14 — He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

As Moses interceded for God’s people, Jesus is ever interceding for his people. **Romans 8:34** — Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

On the mountain Moses received, then mediated God’s word to the people. Jesus was the incarnate Word of God, revealing exactly who the Father is, as we’ve already mentioned in John 1.

Now our Eternal Prophet Jesus does what Moses the prophet was disqualified from doing. Moses was not able to lead the people into the promised place of service and worship, but Jesus coming again to lead into the eternal good land of service, communion, and worship with God. We saw that in Revelation a few weeks ago, and I remind us again from **John 14:2–3** — In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

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We could go on, but let's simply understand why we need a Prophet: We do not by nature hear, see, know, or follow God. By nature we are bound in the domain of darkness, but we don't know it. Does a blind man know it's dark? Nor do those blind to Holy God know their wicked ways lead away from life in Christ to death in sin. We need a prophet to show us who God is, and lead us to him.

Jesus calls us to follow him. He calls us out of darkness into his marvelous light. The darkness of the world? Yes. The darkness of my own heart and understanding? Yes. The Bible tells us the world is dark. It is a metaphor for spiritual wickedness and death. The Bible also tells us our own minds and understanding are darkened. When Jesus says he is the Light of the World and calls us to himself, he is calling us to objective truth. He calls us away from our internal darkness and sinfulness which disorients us to the life of Christ. He calls us to know God, to be satisfied in him, and experience his forgiveness and grace leading to life.

We live in a day where truth is determined by what is felt internally. But the scripture is very clear that what we feel internally apart from the illuminating truth of God is sinful and leads to death. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. (Proverbs 14:12) Christ presents us with God's objective truth; he calls us to orient our lives to his truth; he calls us to turn from our darkness and walk in his marvelous light, experiencing his eternal life.

Every generation throughout history has needed to hear this. Our generation is in tremendous need of meeting and hearing Jesus because it determines truth by what is felt internally, in the heart, if you will. But Jesus, who is truth, says it is exactly the heart that is the problem in its darkened sinfulness. In other words, the problem is not outside of me; the problem is within me. Therefore he calls us from the darkness that is inside of me to the light and life that are in him. This is the message, explained in a clear way, that we take to those who say that what they *feel* is stack pole of truth. It is the Supreme Prophet Jesus — and more than a prophet, as we will see — who speaks the truth of God, who is the way the truth and the life. We orient ourselves to him and live. If we will not do this, we die in our sin.

Last week, we ended with two contemporary illustrations of different people who trusted religious rituals, or baptism, magic words, or prescribed prayers, or church membership as an integral part of their hope for salvation and eternal life. As we have looked Jesus in his office of Prophet, let's understand that only in a personal relationship of faith with the Word of God are we called and led out of sin. Baptism, church membership, Sunday school, small groups, participation in the Lord's supper

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... all of these things are fruit obedience to Christ, but cannot call us out of darkness, or forgive sins, or offer life in and of themselves. Only Christ can do that. He is the Supreme Prophet, making the holiness, love, and grace of God plain. Today, if you hear God call you out of sin's bondage and darkness to come to him, do not harden your heart. He is calling you to light and eternal in himself. He has made his love and grace plain at the cross. Follow him out of the domain of darkness to life in the Son today.

PRAY

GOSPEL THREAD