

# Jesus the Prophet

Acts 3:17-26

Does God speak to us today? Can we hear him? Christians believe that God speaks to us and reveals himself through his prophets, though apart from his grace we don't pay attention to them (vv17-18). This revelation of the living God is radically unique among world religions and finds fulfillment in *the* prophet, Jesus Christ (v18). In the Old Testament—the prophecies, stories, saints and scoundrels—we learn of our need for the messiah and the promise of his coming. We learn humility and certainty.

## **Prophets are Sent**

Unlike priests who come from family lines, we don't often know where prophets come from. God chooses them, and they come speaking his urgent truth into specific situations. Sometimes they come out of desert in Israel, dressed in skins and eating bugs like John the Baptizer, while others like Ezekiel stand by the Chebar Canal in Babylon. Moses is the most famous of the Old Testament prophets (vv22-23) who prophesies of the greater prophet to come (Dt. 18:18-19). But how would you know if a prophet is sent by God? He gives two tests. True prophets do not speak in the name of other gods, and his prophecy must come true (Dt. 18:20-22). The same occurs in New Testament where John tells us to test the spirits (1 Jn. 4:1). Jesus' words and works testify to his office as prophet (Jn. 5:36-37).

## **Prophets Bring God's Message**

The problem is not that we can't hear the prophets because we have a case of spiritual ADD; we simply don't want our deeds to be exposed (Jn. 3:20). Regardless of willful ignorance, God foretold through the prophets that he would send the messiah to suffer and die (v18). And ever since Jesus' death and resurrection, the prophetic message has been proclaimed: "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (v19 cf. Is. 43:25). Why? What does God want to see happen? The Westminster Shorter Catechism, says "Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by His word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation." Peter's offer is wonderful, and it's offered to the murderers of Jesus Christ, "that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." This is the tenor of the gospel proclamation, the will of God revealed. Come, repent, experience this good news, overwhelming relief, invigorating refreshment. Jesus the risen man is in God's presence now, and the benefits of new life and forgiveness are offered to us now. Peter also proclaims the breadth of the effects of the gospel, that Jesus is in heaven "until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of this holy prophets long ago" (v21). The whole creation, currently in slavery to decay, looks forward to that restoration (Rom. 8:21-22). We are invited to look forward to it too.

## **Prophets Counsel with God**

This is not often noted, but prophets not only take messages from God, they take messages to God—and he hears. Jacob wrestles with God to get a blessing (Gen. 32:22-28). Moses changes God's mind regarding the destruction of Israel (Ex. 32:11-14; cf. Num. 14:13-19). Amos pleads for God to forgive and he does (Amos 7:4-6). Prophets are not just mouthpieces of God, but also his friends, members of his Council (Jms. 2:23; Jer. 23:18). John was the greatest prophet until his time, but Jesus has given us more—the least of us is greater than John (Matt. 11:11).

## **Living a prophetic Life in Jesus**

Capital letter Apostles and Prophets write Scripture and heal people at will; they were laid down as the bedrock foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20; 2 Cor. 12:12). But God's Spirit has been poured out on the church, even on the young (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18). In Jesus, the entire church is sent with his message as members of his council, his friends (Jn. 15:15). So hear his prophetic message in the Word preached and read, and repent of your sins. Speak with his prophets and prophetesses, young and old, for wisdom. And proclaim his offer of refreshment to a world that needs to hear it.