

“The Prophets Speak”

November 29, 2015

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

I. Introduction

Recently I read an article critiquing the Bible. The author wrote that since the Bible was written by over 40 different authors over a period of about 1600 years, it should be relegated to the collection of old useless things like wringer washing machines, dial telephones, and black & white TVs. What the author didn't see—perhaps he didn't **want** to see—was that the Bible isn't a collection of unrelated articles but there are several themes which connect them all together. The major theme or strand is concerning the Messiah or as He is called in the Greek—the Christ.

Today, like many churches around the world, we begin our preparations for the celebration of Jesus Christ's coming to earth—His Advent—Christmas. In the Advent reading this morning, Ivy and Jay read part of Isaiah's prophesy—really part of God promises—about the coming Messiah. Scholars tell us that prophets gave over 300 prophesies concerning the Messiah in the Bible. Some are related to His actions in the past; some are related to His actions today—the Present; some are related to His actions in the days ahead—the Future. With today's focus on the prophets, it seemed appropriate to look at some of the things which the prophets spoke. First, some of the prophesies and their fulfillment regarding the activities of the Messiah in the past.

II. Prophesies/Promises for the Past

A. Sample Prophesies

Close to a 100 of the 300 prophesies about Christ are about His birth. The first prophesy is found in [Genesis 3](#)—turn to [Genesis 3:8-15](#). God promised to send someone who would defeat Satan—Someone to crush his head—God would send a Savior. God fulfilled this prophesy—His promise—in Jesus Christ. Peter wrote in [1 Peter 2:24](#), “**He, i.e. Jesus, himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so**

that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” Or as Paul wrote in [Galatians 4:4-5](#), “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” Later in [Genesis 49:10](#) the dying Patriarch Jacob prophesied that “the scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet.” In the genealogy of Jesus recorded in [Luke 3:33](#), we find that He is in the line of Judah.

A familiar prophesy is found in [Micah 5:2](#), we read it almost every Christmas, “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.” *Where was Jesus born?* In [Matthew 2:1](#) we read, “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod.” Turn to [Isaiah 7:14](#). We read the fulfillment of this prophesy in [Matthew 1:18](#): “This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together (*that is, while she was a virgin*), she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.”

B. Prophecies from Isaiah 52 & 53

1. Isaiah 52:13-15

a. His suffering Our Scripture reading this morning from Isaiah is full of prophecies regarding the Messiah—Jesus Christ—and you probably recognized many of them. The last three verses of chapter 52 are a summary and preview of the humiliation and exaltation of God’s servant, the Messiah. This is covered in more detail in chapter 53. In [verse 14](#) we see His suffering: “his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.” When you consider all that Jesus endured between His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and His crucifixion, it is no wonder that He “was disfigured beyond that of any man.”

When He was questioned by Annas, Jesus was slapped by an officer ([John 18:22](#)). At the so-called trial before Caiaphas, He was spat upon, slapped, and beaten on the head with fists ([Matthew 26:67](#); [Mark 14:65](#); [Luke 18:22](#)). Pilate had Him flogged and his soldiers beat Him ([John 19:1-3](#)). Floggings were so severe that many died while being beaten. [Isaiah 50:6](#) says, “I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.”

b. His exaltation In [verses 13 & 15](#) we see His exaltation. God’s Servant suffered and died, but He didn’t remain dead. “He will be raised and lifted up and (will be) highly exalted.” What looked to men and Satan like a humiliating defeat was in the eyes of God a great victory—[Colossians 2:15](#) says, “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” This is why Jesus was able to pray in the Garden just before His arrest in [John 17:4](#), “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”

Jesus exaltation will continue as peoples from every tribe and nation are cleansed by His shed blood. After His resurrection and ascension to His throne, human leaders will be speechless and in awe before the once despised Servant—[Philippians 2:11](#) says that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” People in general will be astonished; they will shut their mouths at the fact that Jesus didn’t suffer and die because He was guilty, but because we are guilty—“By His wounds we are healed.”

2. Isaiah 53

a. The life of the Messiah The 1st [3 verses of Isaiah 53](#) tell about the life of the Messiah. As we are reminded in songs and in Nativity or Crèche scenes, Jesus wasn’t born in a palace and laid in a soft bed—He was born in a barn and His bed was an animal feeding trough—“he had no beauty or majesty.” Isaiah prophesied in the [3rd verse](#) that when He grew up, the Messiah would be despised and rejected by

men. John verified that point in [John 1:11](#), “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” In [John 10:20](#) we read that, “Many of them said, ‘He is demon-possessed and raving mad.’”

b. The death of the Messiah [Isaiah 53:4-8](#) describe Jesus’ death. Verse 4 says, “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.” Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would die for our sins. Turn [1 Peter 2:24](#).

[Isaiah 53:5](#) says, “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.” As prophesied, Jesus was crucified and [John 19:34](#) says, “One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” In [John 20:24-25](#), Thomas said that he wouldn’t believe that Jesus was alive until “I see the marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side.” Back in Isaiah we read that “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.” As prophesied by Isaiah, Jesus was smitten and afflicted, and [Mathew 26:62-63](#) and [27:12-14](#) record that He was silent before His accusers and before Pilate.

c. The burial of the Messiah [Isaiah 53:9](#) describes His burial: “He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.” [Luke 23:33](#) records that “When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals-- one on his right, the other on his left.”

Crucifixion was done for the worst of the worse; Jesus died the death of the wicked. The Messiah would die with criminals. But instead of being buried in a pauper’s grave, [Matthew 27:59-60](#) says that one of the 3 richest men of Jerusalem at the time, Joseph of Arimathea “took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock.” The burial of Jesus Christ is as much a part of the Gospel as His death—turn to [1 Corinthians 15:1-5](#).

d. The vindication of the Messiah [Isaiah 53:10-12](#) record the vindication and exaltation of the Messiah. It was God's will that Jesus die but also that he be vindicated; i.e. that **"His days be prolonged"** and that He **"see the light of life"** through His resurrection. [Turn to Acts 2:22-24](#). The Messiah would rise from the dead.

Obviously, there are more prophecies in these and other verses which we don't have time to look at this morning. All this is to say, that all the prophecies made regarding the Messiah's—Jesus Christ's—actions in the past came true as prophesied—at the right time in the right way. There was no way a man could orchestrate all of these prophecies. They didn't come true by some kind of accident; they came true only because God was in control.

III. Promises for the Present

Since God cannot lie, prophecies made in His Name must come true. A prophecy from God is really a promise from God. Just as all the prophecies regarding the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ came true in the past, the prophecies—the promises—that God made for the present day must also be true. For example, consider [John 14:6](#)—Jesus said, **"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."** Jesus is the only one way to heaven. [Turn to Romans 10:9](#). God says that you must believe that Jesus died in your place as your Savior and you **must** make Jesus Lord of your life—then you will be saved from an eternity in hell. This is a promise from God. [John 1:12](#) says, **"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."** Later in [Romans 8:17](#) we are told that we are **"joint or co-heirs with Christ."**

For those who make Jesus their Lord and Savior, God's promises don't stop there, in [Matthew 11:28](#) Jesus said, **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."** Peter put it this way in [1 Peter 5:7](#), **"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."** In [Matthew 28:20](#)

Jesus said, “**And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**” If you are a child of God you don’t have to carry your burdens alone or at all. You can give them to Christ and as **Philippians 4:7** says, “**The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**” A Christian can have the peace of God.

These are words from God’s prophets—promises from God—that we can experience today. Just as the prophecies (or promises) concerning Jesus were fulfilled in the past, the promises for today are also true.

IV. Promises for the Future

But God’s promises don’t stop with the past or the present, they continue on into the future. In **Acts 1:11**, just after Jesus ascended into heaven, His disciples are told by 2 angels, “**Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**” Jesus is coming back; **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17** says that He is coming back to take those who belong to Him back to heaven to be with Him forever. Jesus is coming back for Christians. Another prophecy in **Hebrews 9:27** says that everyone will be judged. These are God’s promises for the future.

V. Conclusion

It’s really nice to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It’s great to sing Christmas carols, read the Christmas story **AND** who doesn’t like all the decorations and giving and receiving of presents. But we must not stop there. Since God’s prophecies concerning the Messiah have all come true in the past and the present, it is logical and reasonable to assume that His promises—prophecies—for the future will also come true. Jesus is coming back. We will all be judged for what we have done and haven’t done—for our actions as well as our attitudes. And **IF** you haven’t become one of God’s children; if your name isn’t in the Book of life, God says that you will spend eternity in hell. **John 3:36** says, “**Whoever believes in the**

Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.” Turn to Revelation 20:11-15

The prophets tell us that this is the reason Jesus came to the earth—to save sinners. This is God’s message to us, this is the message we must take to others—“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) We must tell the world the reason for Christmas and that Jesus saves. This is the Great Commission—our prime directive.

If you have accepted God’s gift of eternal life, every day, but especially Christmas, is a day to celebrate. You have received the greatest gift a person can ever receive. If you haven’t accepted God’s gift, if you are trying to “*earn your way into heaven*”—no one is ever going to be “*good enough*” since no one is perfect. Why not accept God’s gift of salvation from the punishment of hell and become His child today? God’s promises are true—just trust Him.