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Christ the King & Immanuel Lutheran Churches – Cody & Powell, WY

Advent I – Midweek

December 6, 2023

Text: Deuteronomy 18:9-22; John 1:19-28

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our prophet, priest, and king. Those are the three divine offices which our Lord fulfilled. Before we get too far into things, however, we need to define some terms. The word office describes a sphere of responsibility with defined duties and expectations. The Biblical offices of prophet, priest, and king each have their specific spheres of responsibility and duties. The Bible establishes these offices and describes their duties.

Today, we will consider the office of prophet. A prophet is a man called by God to proclaim the divine word revealed to the prophet by the Lord for the needs of God's people in the present and the future. This was his primary task; prophets were preachers calling the faithful to repentance and faith. Another aspect of the prophetic ministry was prophecies, or predictions about future events.

The standards of prophetic ministry are laid out in Deuteronomy 18:9–22. Deuteronomy 18 began with Moses' warnings about the abominable practices of the inhabitant of Canaan. They practiced divination, fortune telling, reading omens, sorcery, necromancy, and various forms of consultation with the dead. The ancient Canaanites practiced a form of idolatry which required that children be offered as burnt offerings to idols of wood and stone. That was the kind of worship life and culture one found in Canaan before the children of Israel conquered it.

God's people were not to practice such things. Prophets constantly warned God's people not to go back to such abomination. Instead, they were to listen and wait for a Prophet who would proclaim God's Word. This final,

complete, and perfect Prophet would be the consummation of God's prophetic revelation to the world. Listen to how Moses describes this prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15–19:

¹⁵“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— ... ¹⁷And the LORD said to me, ‘...¹⁸I 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. ¹⁹And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

Notice some very important things here: this prophet will speak all that God the Father places in His mouth. And God's people are to listen to Him, first and foremost. “To him you shall listen” says Moses. We hear a similar phrase spoken about Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses and Elijah, both Old Testament prophets, appeared with Jesus in glory. Peter wants to make tabernacles for each, thus placing them all on the same level of authority and importance. God the Father interrupts and says, “This is my beloved Son, listen to Him.” Jesus is the prophet that all other prophets pointed to. They must submit to Jesus' final word. He's *THE* Prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18. All the Father wants us to know will come from this Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ.

About 1,500 years after Deuteronomy 18 and the death of Moses, John the Baptist began preaching in the desert and baptizing God's people in the Jordan River. Priests and Levites from Jerusalem went to John and asked him directly who he was. I am not the Christ, said John. Are you the prophet Elijah? No. Are you the Prophet? There's the question! Are you *THE* prophet of Deuteronomy 18? No.

The Jewish leaders asked, “Then why are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” John's answered with a marvelous confession, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not

worthy to untie.” It’s as if John were saying, “He’s among you, *that* Prophet you’re looking for. He here; and He’s far superior to me. He’ll reveal Himself soon enough. And then you’ll know how far greater He is to me and all prophets who have ever come!”

Jesus did reveal Himself. The next day after John spoke those words, Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River. The Father spoke from heaven and said, “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.” The Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. And there, in the Jordan River, Jesus was anointed to be *THE* final, greatest prophet; and also priest and king.

Jesus did all the things that prophets do. He preached His Father’s word with authority that amazed the crowds. And He predicted the future. He declared Jerusalem would be destroyed; that prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D., about 37 years after our Lord resurrection. Jesus made other predictions too. He said He would rise from the dead after three days. And He did. He told the disciples He would depart back to the Father. He did. His Word has always proven true. There are, however, predictions Jesus gave that haven’t been fulfilled yet. Jesus said He would come again in glory on the Last Day to raise the dead. He said that He would sit on His Father’s throne and judge all humanity in righteousness. He will establish a new heavens and new earth, and so forth. We are waiting for the fulfillment of these promises.

All that Jesus preached was according to His Father’s will; the Father’s Word was in His mouth. Every prediction Jesus made come to pass. Our Lord’s record is spotless and perfect. We have confidence that the predictions about Jesus’ return will come true because: 1) He is *THE* prophet of Deuteronomy 18 as confirmed by John the Baptist and God the Father Himself, and 2) all His past predictions came true, most especially His death and resurrection on the third day. Jesus is coming again; that is certain. And that’s great news for us believers.

Until then however, Jesus' prophetic preaching needs to be heard all the more. His sermons, parables, every word He said. The words and deeds of Jesus are our greatest and highest treasure. The Old Testament writings and the New Testament apostolic witness – all those other books surrounding the four gospels direct our attention to Jesus our prophet. You may discern in this description why our Sunday divine services always have an Old Testament reading, an Epistle reading, and then a text from the Gospel.

Jesus, God's Son, is the Father's final, authoritative prophet. His preaching must be heard. For our Lord proclaims that all your sins and iniquities, all your mistakes and failures, everything that brings you shame and embarrassment, all of it, it forgiven and cleansed by His blood shed on Calvary's cross. He proclaims that you are His dear children. He promises that death and hell will not be able to overcome you and His people. For Christ Himself is preparing a place for you in His eternal kingdom. That's the kind of prophetic preaching that will sustain us in our most holy faith until Jesus comes again. Jesus, *THE* prophet, our great Prophet of salvation.

✠ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ✠ Amen.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.