

# **The Message of a Prophet**

A Sermon by Grayson Stewart Gilbert

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **I. THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE WAS FUNDAMENTALLY SPEAKING IN TERMS OF JUDGMENT AND SALVATION.**

- a. The Prophet would Deliver a Judgment Speech and Oracle of Woe Against them.
  - i. Part One of the Judgment Speech: The Accusation.
    1. The important thing for us to know is that God never acted unpredictably with His people; every single instance of judgment being poured out upon the Israelites is grounded in terms of their disobedience to His covenant.
    2. What we have here then is that the same charge given to the church to be a people who uphold the command of God was given to the Israelites.
      - a. The administration of the covenant might be different, but the God of the covenants is the same.
      - b. God always begins with listing all of the ways they have violated His commands and acted as pagan nations.
      - c. All you have to do is open up to one of the books of the prophets and read the first few chapters and you'll see the accusations brought before them.
  - ii. Part Two of the Judgment Speech: The Verdict.
    1. The prophet is revealing the judgment that has been decided in heaven and will be carried out in order to let justice reign supreme.
      - a. God declares them guilty for breaking the terms of His covenant with them and then expresses that reality in and through judgment.
      - b. God warns them that He will set His face against and oppose them.

- c. In every instance then we see the hand of a God who is faithful to uphold His promises.
- 2. Yet what's happening through these acts of judgment is a purging; there's a removal of the impurity that is plaguing the people.
  - a. They should have been doing this themselves all along – yet because they delighted in evil, they made peace with wickedness and forgot the God who rescued them and covenanted with them.
  - b. God is simply carrying out the commands He gave to them. He is rooting out the evildoer and the idolater from their midst. He is making His people holy once again (Lev. 24:10-22; Deut. 17:2-7; Ex. 21:28-29).
- b. The Prophet would Give them an Exhortation and Call to Repentance.
  - i. They were given a call to repent, meaning a clear call to turn from their sins and turn back to God (Amos 5:4-6; Joel 2:12-14).
    - 1. Yet in almost every single instance, they did not listen to the warning and the pleading of the prophet – and so they were sent into exile and experienced the full measure of God's punishment upon them.
      - a. God gave them every single measure to repent. The prophets would come on to the scene and call for them to turn from their sins, to seek the Lord, and to live.
      - b. Think of it like the warnings you give a rebellious child.
    - 2. There were times where the heart of the king would respond in repentance and the Lord's judgment would be delayed, but inevitably the people fell back into rebellion against God because there was no lasting, godly sorrow and repentance (2 Kgs. 22-23).

- a. An amazing example of this is found when Josiah becomes king and discovers the book of the Law.
  - b. Josiah dies in battle and they appoint his son Jehoahaz to be king, and the Scriptures give us the same line we read with countless kings: He did evil in the sight of the Lord.
- ii. They would receive an announcement of immediate salvation:
1. They would be given the prospect of forgiveness for their sins before judgment was even carried out.
    - a. We see this in Isaiah 1:18-20 where God extends mercy to those who deserve no mercy.
    - b. This is one of the most beloved passages of Scripture – and for good reason, but rarely do you hear of it quoted within the context of judgment.
  2. Even in the midst of their exile, they would also be given the prospect of freedom and restoration.
    - a. If you know your Old Testament well, you'll know that the Kingdom of Israel was divided (1 Kgs. 12).
    - b. At the point of their exile, the verdict was no longer conditional to repentance (2 Kgs 17; 2 Kgs. 24-25). We saw this with the example from Jeremiah 27 last week.
    - c. In the midst of their exile, these promises of restoration would become an incredible hope to the people and spur them toward covenant faithfulness.

3. The basis of their freedom from exile and their restoration was to be found in a consistent application of obedience to the Lord rooted in a love of God and His commands (Jer. 7:21-28).
  - a. It was not simply coming before Him with the proper offerings and performing the proper ceremonial rituals. Several times, in fact, the Lord just simply expresses the reality that obedience is more desirable than a sacrifice.
  - b. The condition then was that they must come before the Lord with a broken and a contrite heart.
4. And yet they were a people with a long history of rebellion and idolatry who would not listen (Jer. 7:25-26).
  - a. As I mentioned in the last sermon, this consistently shapes the message of Jeremiah.
  - b. Yet it is precisely in the midst of all of these calls to judgment that the prophet pronounces the good news of the Lord's salvation (Jeremiah 32:37-42).

**II. This is the consistent message of the prophets: there will be a Prophet who comes to perfectly fulfill Deut. 18:18-22 and bring the Lord's salvation.**

- a. We have the great privilege of being able to see exactly how Christ fulfilled all of the requirements of the prophet in Deut. 18:18-22.
  - i. Jesus was uniquely called by God to be His prophet and we see this clearly in the events surrounding Jesus's birth, baptism, and transfiguration.
    1. In Christ's birth we find that not only is He raised up from His own countrymen, but in Luke 2:30-35 Simeon prophesies of Christ's significance.

2. At His baptism we find all three members of the Trinity present testifying that Christ is the True and Great Prophet (Luke 3:21-22).
  3. At the Transfiguration, we see the great prophets Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus (Matt. 17:1-13).
- ii. Jesus was uniquely given God's Word in a way that the former prophets never had.
1. All throughout the gospels we see Christ proclaim that He cannot and will not speak a word other than that which the Father has given Him to speak.
    - a. The book of John records at least ten different instances showing that Christ spoke the Word of the father precisely as it was given to Him (Jn. 3:11, 5:19, 7:16, 8:26, 8:28, 12:49, 14:10, 14:24, 14:31, 17:8).
    - b. The reason for this is to show that in every aspect, He spoke exactly what the Father gave Him.
  2. Perhaps though the greatest example of this is found in John 1 where we find that Christ Himself is the eternal Word of God made flesh.
    - a. In verse 18 we find the apostle John says that no one has seen the Father at any time, yet Christ is in the bosom of the Father.
    - b. Yet John also tells us that this Christ is the One who has "exegeted" the Father.
- iii. Jesus was uniquely loyal God in ways that the prophets of old could never be, even at their greatest.
1. We learned last week of the incredible faithfulness of the prophets, the ones whom Scripture records the world was not worthy of, and yet, Jesus was their superior in every way.
    - a. He consistently carried out the full will of the Father.

- b. He consistently made it clear that His words and works were consistent with the prophets who came before Him and in perfect harmony with the Scriptures.
  - 2. He confirmed the truth and validity of the entire Old Testament and called the people to repentance and faith so that they might also be loyal to God.
    - a. Christ was not content with the religiosity of the Pharisees and continually called them to the carpet for their hypocrisy.
    - b. Yet at the same, He demonstrated time and again that He was the Messiah, the One who was to come and usher in the new Covenant promised to Israel (Jer. 31:30-40; Amos 9:11-15).
- iv. Jesus was uniquely authenticated and validated by God in His supremacy over all of creation and the fulfillment of His prophecies.
  - 1. Everywhere Jesus went, we find Him having authority over all spheres of life.
    - a. He had authority over all of physical creation.
    - b. He had authority over the demonic realm.
    - c. He had authority over the spiritual realm.
  - 2. We find also that everywhere Jesus went would make prophecies which would come to be fulfilled.
    - a. Christ prophesied of His own betrayal, death, and resurrection (Matt 20:17-19, 26:21-35; Zech. 13:7).
    - b. He prophesied of the coming Spirit who would be poured upon all mankind (Jn. 16:7; Acts 2; Joel 2:28-32).
    - c. He prophesied of the fall of Jerusalem where the temple would come to be destroyed and the beginning of the end of days would be ushered in (Mark 13).

- d. He prophesied of many things, things we have seen fulfilled and things we have not yet seen come to take place.
- b. The prophets looked in anticipation toward these things – they looked for the One who would perfectly fulfill the qualifications outlined in Deut. 18:18-22.
  - i. 1 Peter 1:10-11 reveals to us that the prophets were continually searching for all the signs of the coming Messiah:
    - 1. The prophets were constantly searching out the signs given to them of the coming Messiah.
      - a. They would be looking for the forerunner who came to prepare the way for the coming Messiah (Mal. 3:1, 4:5-6).
      - b. They would be looking for the One born of a virgin (Is. 7:14) in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2).
      - c. They looked for One who could open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf; who could cause the lame to stand and leap for joy and the mute to sing for joy; who would have mastery over all of creation and bend it to His will (Is. 35:5-6).
      - d. They would be looking for their humble and righteous King and Savior who rode upon a donkey (Zech. 9:9) and would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12-13).
    - 2. They looked for the One who would ultimately come to be known as the suffering servant (Is. 52:13-53:12; Ps. 22).
      - a. They looked for the One who had mastery even over the great enemy of all men: death (Ps. 16:8-11).

- b. They looked for the outpouring of the Spirit, the renewal of the heart, the restoration of His people, and all the glorious promises that would come to the One who was saved through this Messiah.
- ii. This is what I was speaking about in the last sermon where I said that the culmination of all of history was leading up to this point.
  - 1. The prophets knew of this because it had been delivered to them, and they were searching these things out with great anticipation.
  - 2. The reason for that is simple: He is the hope of the world, from creation to that great Final Day.
    - a. There was never a “Plan B” with God – it was always Christ.
    - b. The hope of Israel is not that she will be able to live up to standards of God’s covenant with her.
    - c. The hope of Israel is that God is the One who upholds His covenant and delivers them.

### **III. The Joy We Get to Share as these Old Testament Books are Unfolded Before Our Eyes is that We Get to See the Faithfulness of God.**

- a. These Writings are a Means of Encouraging us to Live by Faith in God’s Uncompleted Work.
  - i. The prophets testify of the utter faithfulness of God in fulfilling all His promises.
    - 1. We see this come out in the fact that He will punish His children; He will not reward the evil doer, but He will indeed exact vengeance upon them.
    - 2. Yet we also see this come out as God works to accomplish His saving work even in the midst of a rebellious people.
  - ii. The prophets testify to the fact that our Old Testament is worth reading and studying diligently.



1. We have many today that would suggest that we unhitch ourselves from the Old Testament.
  2. Yet we find a group of people known as the Bereans who diligently searched through the Scriptures to see if what Paul said about the person and work of Christ was actually true (Acts 17:11).
  3. We find also that as two of the disciples were on the road to Emmaus that Christ appeared to them and revealed Himself in all of the prophets (Luke 24:13-35).
  4. Likewise, we have the Ethiopian eunuch who is reading the scroll of Isaiah and doesn't understand who the passage is speaking about (Acts 8:26-40).
- b. These Writings are Also a Means of Encouraging Us to Live in Obedience to God's Commands.
- i. In so many ways, we will see that more often than not, we are just like the unfaithful people of Israel.
    1. We tend to look at the miraculous things that happened in their midst and judge them, essentially saying that if we saw manna raining from heaven, there's no way we would act like they did.
      - a. Yet the reality we have been given the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does not go before us, but resides in us, and yet we still find excuses and reasons to indulge our flesh.
      - b. But more importantly, remember, it was not the miraculous alone which authenticated the prophet.
    2. We push the bounds on God's love and mercy – and then become just like the blubbing child when the fullness of our sin catches up with us.
      - a. We do everything we can to escape the consequences of our actions when they finally come about.

- b. We shirk our responsibilities to live with ultimate reference and submission to Christ.
- ii. God promises that the truly repentant one will experience the fullness of His lavish grace and mercy.
  - 1. Not only will they become white as snow; not only will their sins be separated from them as far as the East is from the West, they will inherit the all of the promises given to those in Christ.
  - 2. If you are in sin and rebellion and yet identify as one who is in Christ, remember: God is faithful to all His promises.
    - a. He will cause a purging restoration in us.
    - b. We may experience an exile, if you will, yet if we submit ourselves to His process, will enter into His rest.