

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel - Jesus the Prophet

There are many joyful Christmas carols that we sing and there are some that are a little more thoughtful. My favorite carol is *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* because it is so sobering. When we think of the joy that God has presented to us in salvation, it should not come without being tempered by a sober sense of why *we needed* salvation.

Luke 7:40-50 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

When we sing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* we hear a certain soul pain in longing for the coming of God to be with us, because that is what Emmanuel means. Israel longed for the coming of Emmanuel which can be heard in Psalms.

For these three Sundays before Christmas, and then for a fourth I would like to capture the longing that Israel had and *what* they were longing *for* to appreciate what should be so special about Christmas. The anticipation of Christmas is special all by itself, but it

becomes more holy as we recognize the Holy One of Israel and some of the ways His arrival was special.

In Israel, prophet, priest, and king were three major offices in the Old Testament. Especially in the case of king and priest, these offices were separate, providing a system for careful, holy, and effective direction of God's people. God had a strong judgment for their failure in Micah 3 where he condemned the princes, the priests, and the prophets.

Mic 3:9-12 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

10They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

11The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, *Is not the LORD among us?* none evil can come upon us.

12Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed *as* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

There were some who were better than others in these offices, but God's people could look forward to the Messiah who would be the perfection of those offices.

Today, we are going to look at the role of Christ as a prophet.

1. The desire for a prophet.

When you say "prophet," some people get an image in their head of some kind of mystic who speaks in riddles about the future. Or, perhaps they think of a preacher speaking in swelling tones...sometimes directing people to send money in to his ministry. However, we are surrounded by prophets. Prophets serve to point out what is wrong and needs to be taken care of in society. Our preachers are not the only voices of warning. Supposed news networks, commentators, and politicians all fill out that role. Many people want to know what is coming so they can be prepared. Of course there are many others who unknowingly reveal their naivete and make themselves look like they have low intelligence by scoffing at those who care about being informed. Just before God promised a prophet to whom they would listen, He condemned their turning to the occult for messages. The fact that they were turning to the occult demonstrates people's desire for prophets.

Deut 18:9-14 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

10There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

11Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

13Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

14For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so *to do*.

In this Scripture, we see the extreme lengths people will go to get a prophetic perspective. This does not make all the other ways that people look to to be informed. God is only pointing out what they will end up with if they are not careful about where they look for information. He later warned them about watching out from the beginning when someone even *starts* to claim to be speaking with authority.

Deut 18:20-22 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

21And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

22When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Prophecy is a tricky business.

- King George II said in 1773 that the American colonies had little stomach for revolution.
- An official of the White Star Line, speaking of the firm's newly built flagship, the Titanic, launched in 1912, declared that the ship was unsinkable.
- In 1939 The New York Times said the problem of TV was that people had to glue their eyes to a screen, and that the average American wouldn't have time

for it.

- An English astronomy professor said in the early 19th century that air travel at high speed would be impossible because passengers would suffocate.
– The World's Worst Predictions

The moment you forecast, you know you're going to be wrong—you just don't know when and in which direction.

If you're ever right, never let them forget it.
– Edgar R. Fiedler

The rule on staying alive as a financial forecaster is to give them a number or give them a date, but never give them both at once.
– Jane Bryant Quinn

Prediction is a very difficult art, especially when it involves the future.
– Physicist Niels Bohr

It is baffling how anyone can take the media seriously when they have, for so long now, abandoned all proportion to deliver a caricature of the news of such monstrous distortion. In reaction to this, we have been blessed with so many strong voices which have been raised up. When you hear the world squeal and scream at them, you know that righteousness has touched a nerve and should fight even harder.

Prov 11:10-11 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, *there is* shouting.

11By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Prov 14:34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people.

2. The promise of a prophet.

Deut 18:15-19 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

16According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

17And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken.

18I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak

unto them all that I shall command him.

19And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him.

The prophet Who God is describing here is Jesus Christ. Jesus also pointed this out to them:

John 5:45-46 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

46For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

But God had set many examples before them:

Heb 11:32-40 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samson, and *of* Jephthae; *of* David also, and Samuel, and *of* the prophets:

33Who through faith subdued k i n g d o m s , w r o u g h t righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

The prophets of the Old Testament never received the promised kingdom while they were alive, God kept it in reserve until the day that His promised one would be revealed. God's promises are sure. Paul points out in Rom 1 how the promise of a Messiah was made through the prophets all through the Old

Testament.

Rom 1:1-2 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

Heb 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. Jesus is the Prophet.

As we study the Life of Christ, we have observed how the Pharisees and other leaders have weighed down the Word of God with their interpretations. In fact the method of the scribes had been to exalt the commentators of the Law along with the observance of the Law. When Jesus came, His teaching was so refreshing and powerful.

Mark 1:22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Orators, politicians, and demagogues will use sound bites or short pithy sayings that are clever to evoke emotional responses from people. Cult leaders and Mystics are famous for bringing up and creating words that could be used to mean anything at all. Sometimes people like to use philosophy, which is always based on certain assumptions and speculations. In that case, one's conclusions are only as good as the assumptions on which they are founded. People treat science as if it is God. Science never proves anything. At best science only arrives at the best possible explanation. The problem is that many times the conclusions of science have such evidence to back them up that they are either very obvious or highly reliable. But the scientific method always assumes that further data could refine one's conclusions. It is ridiculous how politicians try to employ science to give authority to public policy. The more complex the systems that science tries to resolve, the greater the possibility of error to be multiplied. The very notion of the claim that there is a consensus among scientists defies the very nature of science itself.

The only absolute knowledge that we have comes from revelation from God, the source of all knowledge.

Jesus' teaching was different than the scribes in that *they* used another method of persuasion called an appeal to authority. They were very busy learning because of their work in copying Scripture. They did not have any claim to authority in themselves. They were very humble because they would essentially footnote everything they produced. But, have you ever tried to read an academic paper with all of its references? It makes sense to academics, but you quickly get the idea that their work was meant for an inner circle. Could you imagine if the evening news was delivered that way to you? Newscasters do not refer you to footnotes and bibliographies to justify what they are reporting to you. Jesus was different because He spoke as the author of the Bible.

There is power in the preaching of the Word.

1Cor 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1Cor 2:4 And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

People find it refreshing when they meet up with a church where the Word of God is presented with Its authority instead of rote memorization of a catechism or an attempt to incorporate worldly philosophy that caters to leaving people feeling comfortable in their sin. Jesus spoke with boldness and that boldness was apparent in the way He taught and could visibly demonstrate His power - casting out demons by His authority.

As a prophet, Jesus did not only come loving us, but by His presence and sacrifice to convict us.

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

People do not want to come to a Jesus who judges sin, they want a Jesus who will not require anything of them.

Matt 10:34-39 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

36And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not

worthy of me.

38And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

The Jews in their day, the Ninevites in their day, as Pharaoh *should* have been in his day, we in our day need a prophet to show us the straight way. When we think of Jesus in this Christmas season, we want to recognize that Jesus came to earth as the ultimate prophet. The prophets of old had most of the message, but not all:

1Pet 1:10-12 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you:

11Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Acts 3:22-26 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Luke 7:40-50, Mic 3:9-12

1. The desire for a prophet. Deut 18:9-14,20-22, Prov 11:10-11, 14:34
2. The promise of a prophet. Deut 18:15-19, John 5:45-46, Heb 11:32-40, Rom 1:1-2, Heb 12:1-2

3. Jesus is the Prophet. Mark 1:22, 1Cor 1:18, 2:4, John 15:22, Matt 10:34-39, Acts 3:22-26