

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

“*The Word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw...*” (Isa 2:1)

What does it mean to be a prophet?  
Or what is it to prophecy?

Is it an ability within someone?  
A strength or a gift to predict the future?  
Did Isaiah have an insight or a special knowledge that others didn't?

What does it mean to be a prophet?

During these midweek services we'll be taking a closer look at the prophet's words.  
We'll see how Isaiah preaches Christ, almost 750 years before His birth.

But before we get into *what* he saw and preached,  
we must wrestle with the fact *that* he saw and preached.

This is precisely what it means to be a prophet.  
In 1 Samuel we learn that the prophets were first called *seers*. (1 Sam 9:9)  
Their primary task was to *see* what the Lord showed them.  
This is what we call a “revelation”—that is, something was *revealed* to the prophets.

The way it typically worked is that God would call a man into His heavenly council.  
In a sense, the prophet would pull up a seat with the angels and archangels, and all the company  
of heaven.  
He'd be gathered around the throne where the pierced Lamb reigns.

Then the Lord would speak a word.  
And this Word would become flesh right before the prophet's eyes.  
He'd see the reality of the word, whether it be a war or a judgment, or the salvation of mankind.

The prophet's next task, after seeing and hearing the Word, is to go and preach that word.  
He is to take what was revealed in the heavenly council and make it known to man on earth.  
This preaching of the vision, this telling of the word of the Lord,  
sometimes spoke of things already past.  
Sometimes it was for things long in the future.  
And other times it was something that would take place right away.

This is because the reality as it was shown and spoken in heaven took place outside of time.  
And yet it gets preached here on earth, very much within both time and space.

In any case, that's Isaiah—a prophet of the Lord, a man called into the heavenly council to see  
and hear the Word, and then sent to preach this word to Judah and Jerusalem.

And what did he preach?

*“It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the Lord  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,  
and many peoples shall come, and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go the law,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isa 2:2-3)*

Notice when this will take place: *in the latter days*.

When’s that?

15 years?

After the exile?

When Christ is born?

Or dies?

Or rises again?

Or comes again?

When?

This is the hope of Advent.

When you’re suffering—deep in despair, drowning with a sense of powerlessness—  
all you want to hear is that it will end.

You need hope for what seems a hopeless life.

And that’s what Advent is here to deliver: hope to a broken and hurting world.

That’s what Isaiah was sent to proclaim.

It didn’t have a stopwatch or a schedule of events.

He wasn’t given to see Herod or the manger—  
just a virgin and a child.

Isaiah goes on:

*He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isa 2:4)*

This coming savior will be a judge who brings peace.  
 He'll put to rest the wars and rumors of war throughout the land—  
 and better yet, the wars in my mind, in my heart.

This coming king desires to reign not just on a throne in a palace, though that too;  
 He desires above all else, to reign in our hearts—  
 to quiet our consciences and relieve their guilty burdens,  
 to remove our fears and drive out our demons,  
 to ease our frustrations and speak peace to our anger.

That's our hope.  
 Isaiah, the prophet of the Lord, has seen within the heavenly council.  
 He's witnessed the will of God for you.  
 And now he preaches the Word of peace—  
 that the weapons we'd use for war against our enemies,  
 will become the very things that produce fruits of joy.

He'll take our cutting words and use them to build one another up.  
 He'll take our fists of rage and ease their clench to comfort those who mourn.

These are the swords turned to plowshares, the spears into pruning hooks—  
 and the Lord promises to unteach from our minds that sense for war and outrage.

Who among you wouldn't want that anger removed?  
 Who doesn't desire that promise, that relief?

So Isaiah calls us along with all the faithful, all those who hear this Word and believe the vision:  
*O house of Jacob,  
 come, let us walk  
 in the light of the Lord. (Isa 2:5)*

You—  
 you House of Jacob,  
 you Christian Church,  
 you sons and daughters of the King—  
 Come!  
 Let us walk in the light of the Lord!  
*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*