

Christmas

Advent 2 : God's Promise to the Prophets

Foundation

Bible passage: Isaiah 9.6

Advent is the name given to the time leading up to Christmas. The name means coming, and at Advent Christians remember Jesus' coming among us and His promises to come again.

On the Second Sunday in Advent, we remember the promises of God given through the Prophets in the Old Testament. A prophet was someone through whom God spoke to the people. Prophets who had messages about Jesus include Moses, Nathan, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Micah and several Psalms some of which are by David and others unattributed. There are less precise prophecies through Ezekiel, Daniel, Zephaniah, Haggai, Habakkuk, Micah and Amos.

“men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”

Because of the association between prophets and the word of God the Second Sunday in Advent used to be known as Bible Sunday. In recent years some churches have moved this to October, to avoid it getting lost in the modern frenzy leading up to Christmas.

The prophets generally spoke warnings to the people of Israel because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord and their ungodly behaviour. Often prophets were very unpopular, and some were persecuted or killed. They spoke of judgement which did not always happen because sometimes people repented. At other times people would not listen and the judgement promised happened



with devastating consequences. But many of the prophets were also to deliver messages of hope. It is some of these wonderful promises that are especially well known and remembered at Christmas.

One example of such a promise can be found in what God through Isaiah, about 700 before Jesus was born:

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

At first this sounds like a new king is being promised, but the names He is given show He is much more than an ordinary king.

Prayer at the lighting of the second candle

God our Father, you spoke to the prophets of old of a Saviour who would bring peace and helped them to spread the message of His coming. Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, to share with those around us the good news that through Jesus we can have peace with you. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. Amen.



God spoke through the prophets, centuries before Jesus was born, telling people about Jesus and what He came to do.