

THE KING IS COMING!

Old Testament Prophecies about the Coming of the Messiah

Developed by Matushka Sandy Kopestonsky, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Mogadore, OH, 1993.

- Use 2 microphones, one on stage left and one on stage right.
- Students, in costume and carrying scrolls that contain the text they are to read, line up at microphones in the following order. Ask students to be familiar with the text.
- Alternate speakers from left then right

Left

Narrator 1
Jeremiah
Daniel
Malachi
Narrator 2

Right

Isaiah
Ezekiel
Micah
Zechariah
St. John the Baptist

After Narrator 1 speaks, he goes to center stage. The remaining speakers form a line on each side of Narrator 1 once they have spoken. Those who enter from the left, stand to the left of Narrator 1 those who enter from the right, stand to the right of Narrator 1.

[1] NARRATOR 1:

When studying the history of God's plan for our salvation, we learn that God prepared His people, the Hebrews, for the arrival of the Messiah through many prophets. A prophet is one who interprets the times and speaks by the direct inspiration of God. The secondary meaning of the word is one who foretells the future. God sent these messengers, the prophets, to tell us to turn back to God and to prepare us for coming of the Messiah.

Many prophecies point to the coming of the Messiah and what He will do. The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame shall walk, the dead will arise. The birth of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of these prophecies.

According to Christians, the Old Testament finds its deepest meaning and its most perfect fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ and in the life of His Church.

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, God sent them out of the Garden and everything was taken away from them. But God still loved Adam and Eve and promised to send His Son to show His love. Then God set about preparing the way for Jesus' coming. The first announcement about the Savior can be found in the first Book of the Bible, called Genesis, chapter 3, verses 14-15:

“The Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.’”

We as Orthodox Christians understand this passage to mean that there would be hostility, or bitter feelings, between the devil and mankind and that the child of a woman (the seed) would finally conquer the hold of death that the devil had over humanity.

Jesus Christ did exactly that. He conquered death; that is, he bruised the devil himself unto death and broke his grip on Adam and Eve. This is why in the Icon of the Descent into Hades we see Christ pulling Adam and Eve out of Hades, out of the grip of death.

[2] ISAIAH (742-687 BC - Major Prophet)

I am the prophet ISAIAH, the son of Amos, who lived during the same hard time as Micah. There are many stories about me because I advised the kings of Israel. During the reign of one of the bad kings, I wrote about the promised new King. Unlike the bad kings who loved fighting and power, the promised King would be wise and peace loving.

This is my prophecy of the Son of a Virgin - Isaiah 7:14-15

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emanuel (which is interpreted God with us.”

This is my prophecy of the Child - Isaiah 9:6

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called ‘Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.’ Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His Kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.”

This is my prophecy of the Savior being from the Root of Jesse - Isaiah 11: 1 -3

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.”

[3] JEREMIAH - Major Prophet during the 7th century before Christ

I, JEREMIAH, am a reluctant prophet and suffered greatly at the hands of the people. I was constantly persecuted for my proclamation of the Word of the Lord. My messianic prophecies are often read in the festal services of the Church.

This is my prophecy of the New Covenant - Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.”

[4] EZEKIEL (Major Prophet)

My name is EZEKIEL. I was a priest as well as a prophet. I am directly concerned with God's righteous anger over the sins of His People, making specific reference to the presence and the departure of the Lord's glory in the Jerusalem temple. My passage about God's resurrection of the "dry bones" of dead Israel through the breathing in of His Holy Spirit is read over the tomb of Christ at the Great Saturday service of the Orthodox Church. It is Chapter 37.

This is my prophecy about Jesus as the Good Shepherd - Ezekiel 34:23-24

“And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.”

[5] DANIEL

Many, many years before Jesus was born, people, called prophets, looked forward to the new and loving King that God promised to send. I am DANIEL and I was one of these prophets. I had many adventures as a prophet. Why, I was even an advisor to a Persian King. I also had many strange dreams. In one of his dreams, I saw the promised new King coming to God's throne and God giving the King the whole world to rule and love. My prophecy is read in the Church at the vigil of Pascha. It is concerned with the faithfulness of the Jews to their God in the time of forced apostasy, that is, abandonment of faith.

This is my prophecy about the New King - Daniel 7:13-14

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

[6] MICAH

I, MICAH, was a prophet who lived in a time when my country was surrounded by powerful enemies who wanted to destroy it. Israel also had many bad Kings in my day. But I remembered the loving kindness of King David and God's promise that a new King, one of David's descendants, would love the world. I said that Bethlehem, David's birthplace, would also be the place where the new King would be born.

My prophecy of Bethlehem as His birthplace - Micah 5:2

"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth One Who is to be ruler in Israel, Whose origin is from of old, from ancient days."

[7] MALACHI (500-450 BC)

My name is Malachi, one of the last prophets. I was worried about what it would be like when the promised new king would come. I thought about how much we have hurt God by being selfish instead of loving. I wrote that it would be very difficult to face God's promised king just as it would be difficult for us to face someone that we have hurt.

Malachi 3:1

"Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple: the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts."

Malachi 4:2,5

"But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings ... Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

[8] ZECHARIAH (520-518 BC)

I am ZECHARIAH, who told about the appearance of the Savior King, referring to Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Here is my Prophecy about the Prince of Peace entering the Holy City - Zechariah 9:9-10

"Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious is He; humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass."

[9] NARRATOR 2 (Narrator makes reference to Elijah)

ELIJAH was a very special prophet who lived long before John the Baptist. He never talked about the promised King, but because God let him escape death by bringing him to heaven in a fiery chariot, Elijah is God's extra-special messenger. Elijah is the prophet who will announce that the promised King has come. Jesus believed that John the Baptist played the part of Elijah by announcing that Jesus was the promised King. (*NARRATOR 2 steps back for John the Baptist to speak then returns to the microphone.*)

[10] JOHN THE BAPTIST

I am John the Baptist, cousin of Jesus. For many years my father, Zechariah, and mother, Elizabeth, had no children. One day while my father Zechariah was in the Temple, God sent the angel Gabriel to him to announce that he and my mother would have a special son who would help God. Because my father did not believe Gabriel, he lost his voice and could not talk until his son (me) was born. Then Zechariah sang a song about me, telling what wonderful things I would do for God. I am often called the last of the prophets.

When I grew up, I left home and went to live in the wilderness where I wore rough clothes and ate grasshoppers and honey made by wild bees. I told people that God's promised New King was coming and that people should prepare for Him by reforming their lives and being baptized. I did not know who this new King would be until Jesus came to be baptized, and a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's son, the Promised King.

Prophecy that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand: John 1:23,26-27,29-31,34

I said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said, '... I baptize with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie...' "

When Jesus approached me to be baptized, I replied, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me. I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel'.... and I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

[11] NARRATOR 2 (*If you need more speakers, make this Narrator 3.*)

When the fullness of time had arrived, was it just a coincidence that there appeared a bright star guiding the three wise men? Was it a coincidence that it was a clear night and the animals were out in the field? Was it just a coincidence that there was no room in the inn that night? Was it all a coincidence? All of creation was present for the joyous arrival of Jesus Christ: the heavens, the earth, the star, the angels, the poor shepherds, and the animals.

What does all this mean for us TODAY? Christ gave us examples of how we should live our lives. God's Son gave His life for us and opened the door to heaven that had been closed by the angel during Adam and Eve's expulsion from paradise. Jesus prepared His disciples to build on the foundation. On Pentecost we witness the beginning of the Church, the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, our Church, and the growth of Christian communities.

Where does all this lead? To the Kingdom to Come that we refer to in the Lord's Prayer, to salvation, eternal life, either with God forever or to eternal darkness. It's up to us to us to strive for the Kingdom of Heaven. May the Birth of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be a turning point for us and may it help renew our faith and love for all. CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!