

Waiting for His Arrival and the Storyline of the Bible  
"The Law and the Exodus Speak to the Hero's Arrival"  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths

Prayer:

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins. [Thank you for saving us from our sins] so that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (<http://www.bcponline.org/>)

Read: Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Acts 3:22; 7:37; Exodus 12:21-28

Promises and pictures; images. Each promise and every picture are invitations to believe, to hope when all appears lost, called to trust when everything would argue otherwise. For forty years the nation of Israel followed the counsel of God through Moses. Decades were worn thin by unbelief and open rebellion; streams of questions creating seas of defiance. Into such a sea, many drowned. Yet within a generation of rejection were planted the seeds of future pursuit. Though some fell, others followed.

God throughout met with His people. He called and invited. He wooed and pursued. He never stopped doing what He does. It is impossible for us to fathom why God would yearn for us to share in His eternal and harmonious communion, yet He desires for His people to experience the joy He has in Himself by sharing this joy with one another. It is truly unfathomable, yet this is the essence of the Story.

Moses was coming to the end of his earthly ministry. The idea that the nation would be without his leadership was unimaginable. Who would speak for God? Who would know what God wants known and lead them in it? Here in Deuteronomy 18:15-22 God promises to raise up another prophet just like Moses; One who will speak for God and lead them in His ways.

"The promised prophet, therefore, was to resemble Moses in this respect, that he would act as mediator between Jehovah and the people, and make known the words or the will of the Lord." (Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary*, Deuteronomy 18:15).

It is difficult for us who have a completed canon to appreciate what life would be like in its absence. The prophet was the spoken Word of God. He came with revelation and authority. His word was binding. What would happen in the absence of such an individual? What would happen to us in the absence of the written Word of God? This is the weight of what the nation faced in Deuteronomy. They were about to enter into the promise land. For forty long years they saw the provision of God and heard the persistent grumbling of unbelief. Now the believing remnant sought comfort in a promise. The promise spoke to a future prophet, one like Moses, who would speak for God and lead them into the truth.

Every prophet came as a shadow of something greater. Each spoke in behalf of God; each came with an authority that was alien to them. But one would come. Each, in their turn, would wait and long for the arrival of the one; the one who was to come. Generations would come and go. One thousand four hundred years would pass before the promise would be fulfilled, but fulfilled it would be.

In the fullness of time God would send His Son, His only begotten Son to be His Prophet, His Priest, and His King (Gal. 4:4). In explaining the Holy Spirit's arrival in dramatic form, Peter would cite Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 when he said,

“Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you' (Acts 3:22).

New Testament Scholar A.T. Robertson notes how, “Like me, as me, literally; Moses (De 18:14-18) claims that God raised him up as a prophet and that another and greater one will come, the Messiah. The Jews understood Moses to be a type of Christ (John 1:21).” (*A.T. Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament* on Acts 7:37). “This prophecy, therefore, is very properly referred to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, as having been fulfilled in Him. ” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary*, Deuteronomy 18:15).

It is for this reason, Philip in speaking to Nathanael, says, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45).

The Jewish nation was waiting for the prophet's arrival. When John the Baptist began his ministry those who inquired of him asked this very question.

“They asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ And he said, ‘**I am not.**’ ‘**Are you the Prophet?**’ And he answered, ‘No.’” (John 1:21).

When Stephen was defending his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, he noted Deuteronomy 18:18 as evidence in his defense.

“This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, ‘GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.’” (Acts 7:37).

“Stephen undoubtedly means to argue that Moses was predicting the Messiah as a prophet like himself who is no other than Jesus so that these Pharisees are in reality opposing Moses. It was a neat turn.” (*A.T. Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament* on Acts 7:37).

With every prophet there was expectancy, a waiting. Those who heard the echo knew the voice behind it. Although space prohibits expansion, there is also the promise and picture of a greater king and mediating priest. The scepter will not depart from Judah (Gen. 49:8-12) and

“God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering” (Gen. 22:7, 8). These are the promises, and these are the pictures speaking to larger truths.

What God began in Genesis 3:21 with the slaying of an innocent animal in order for blood to be shed and a covering to be secured, He continued to “image” to the nation. It is seen in Genesis 22 with the offering of the son Isaac by his father Abraham. It is also seen in the Exodus from Egypt by the Israelites in Exodus 12:21-28.

For four hundred and thirty years the nation of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, eventually succumbing to the despotic enslaving power of a Pharaoh.

<sup>23</sup> “Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel **sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.** <sup>24</sup> **So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant** with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>25</sup> **God saw** the sons of Israel, and **God took notice** of them” (Exod. 2:23-25).

<sup>7</sup> “The LORD said, ‘**I have surely seen** the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have **given heed to their cry** because of their taskmasters, for **I am aware of** their sufferings. <sup>8</sup> **So I have come down to deliver them** from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. <sup>9</sup> Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, **so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.**” (Exod. 3:7-10).

It was God who led them into the land of Egypt so that they might learn to wait and yearn for the deliverance that only He could provide. Remember, the “itch,” the yearning, the longing can only be “scratched” by God. In Egypt His people would cry out for His deliverance. God would never forget His people, and He would and does take notice of them. The fellowship, the communion that exists within the holy Trinity is what God designed man to share, first with Himself, and then with one another. He is inviting and calling them into this union of sacred rest.

God is always arriving, and we must always wait for His coming with hope and anticipation. But how? How would God bring His people from the place of bondage into His glorious rest? The one event that would mark the nation forever is the Exodus. The provision is in Exodus 12:21-28.

<sup>12</sup> “For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments--I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup> **The blood shall be a sign for you** on the houses where you live; and **when I see the blood I will pass over you**, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. <sup>14</sup> **Now this day will be a**

**memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.** . . .<sup>21</sup> Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, ‘Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb.<sup>22</sup> You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.<sup>23</sup> For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and **when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.**<sup>24</sup> And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever.<sup>25</sup> When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite.<sup>26</sup> And when your children say to you, **‘What does this rite mean to you?’**<sup>27</sup> you shall say, **‘It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.’** And **the people bowed low and worshiped.**<sup>28</sup> Then the sons of Israel went and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did” (Exod. 12:12-28).

God is always expanding on a singular idea: “without the shedding of blood there is no atonement for sin” (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). Those who obeyed God were saved from the destroying angel. From this event, they were carried through the destruction of Egypt’s armies. The Passover Lamb speaks to something greater. It is a shadow cast by the divine image. Its significance lies in what it speaks to. It promises and pictures something more. Just as a nation waited for God’s arrival, so also must we. There is this hankering that nothing created can address. The Passover Lamb and the Exodus event are both “scratches,” but their greater fulfillment happens at Calvary when the fullest and final Lamb is offered up in behalf of His people and He, in offering, delivers His people from their bondage.

Like the nation, we wait for the King who will watch over His people, we wait for the Prophet who will speak to His people and we wait for the Priest who will mediate for His people before their God. We wait for the sacrifice that will put an end to sin “once for all” (Heb. 9:28; 10:10). We wait for a final deliverance from sin’s bondage. The end is sure and the outcome inevitable, but we wait . . . and long for Him.