

# TAKE TIME OUT

## *Pastoral Retreat*

Half Acre, Horton Heath, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 7JS

Tel: 01202-824834

Email: [janice.morgan@methodist.org.uk](mailto:janice.morgan@methodist.org.uk)



November/December 2020

### **ADVENT Week 2: GOD'S WORD = Prophets**

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020:** The second candle is lit for God's Prophets:

**Candle 2:** God's prophets remind us of God's Word; both prophets of old and prophets of our time and generation. Prophets are simply people who have given their life over to God's will and purpose before and above anything and anyone else. Their whole focus is rooted in God's Word and grounded in the example of Jesus. It is because of their constant prayerful relationship with the Lord that their heart becomes very close to God. Such an intimate relationship develops discernment of everyday situations and circumstances in accord with God's Word and for His divine purpose. It is this discerned revelation that prophets are then compelled by the Spirit of God to reveal to the people, whether they listen or not. Through the prophets, those willing to listen can better understand what God wants to do for His people and what God wants His people to do for Him, both here and now.

**Opening prayer:** May the Word of God lead His people into all Truth; May the Lord reveal the hidden meaning of God's will and purpose; May the Holy Spirit inspire us to develop an intimate relationship with our Father God through Jesus His Son; and may it begin right here and right now. **Amen!**

**Poem: GOD's PROPHETIC WORD** ©Janice Morgan-2015-July

The Word of God is prophetic in nature  
It tells the story of human adventure  
The journey of life with God at the helm  
Leads to a place in the heavenly realm  
Where secrets are kept by the Spirit of God  
Awaiting the time when a spiritual prod  
Is needed to show the next step on the road  
Or give wisdom to shake off the hurt of the goad  
The strength to hold on when the way becomes rough  
Is found in the Word of the Lord; that's enough  
To recognise signs and predictions of wonders  
And keep all God's children from making great blunders  
God's way to our future is now plain to see  
Believe in God's Word; what He says, it will be.

**CD: The Beginning: Track 5:** The Word is so Near *by* Michael Card [Deuteronomy 30:4](#)  
2:17 minutes – can be found on YouTube

The WORD is so near

To your heart and your tongue  
With the One you confess  
And acknowledge the Son  
With the other believe  
And are justified  
And find life in knowing  
It was for you He died.

No, it's not up in heaven  
Where your thoughts could not reach  
Nor beyond the ocean  
On some distant beach  
No, the WORD is so near  
In the innermost part  
It's alive on your lips,  
It abides in your heart

The WORD is so near  
To your heart and your tongue  
With the One you confess  
And acknowledge the Son  
With the other believe  
And are justified  
And find life in knowing  
It was for you He died.

**Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-11** *The prophetic revelation of God's Word*

<sup>1</sup>A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. <sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. <sup>3</sup>His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. <sup>6</sup>The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup>The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup>They will not hurt or destroy on all My holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. <sup>10</sup>On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the people's; the nations shall enquire of Him, and His dwelling shall be glorious. <sup>11</sup>On that day the Lord will extend His hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that is left of His people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. <sup>12</sup>He will raise a signal for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

**Matthew 1:18-25** *The Advent story continues*

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just as he had resolved to do this,

an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Immanuel,' which means, 'God is with us'. <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

**CD: The Beginning: Track 6:** Meditation #3 Shema by Michael Card [Deuteronomy 6](#)  
4:13minutes – can be found on YouTube

Shema, Israel	<i>Hear, Israel</i>
Shema, Israel	<i>Hear, Israel</i>
Shema, Israel	<i>Hear, Israel</i>
Adonai Eluhenu Adonai	<i>The Lord your God, the Lord</i>
Adonai Eluhenu Adonai	<i>The Lord your God, the Lord</i>
Adonai Eluhenu Adonai	<i>The Lord your God, the Lord</i>
Echad	<i>Is One</i>

**Reflection:** *Joseph's Dilemma*

Joseph was still reeling from the shock of Mary's news. Oh God, Almighty, what am I to do? Please help me. Mary's pregnant and not with my child! I have kept the law of purity and not yet lay with her. How could she do this to me? Yet, Mary said she is still pure and it was the Holy Spirit that made her pregnant! How on this earth am I meant to believe that! I mean, it's impossible for a woman to become pregnant without knowing a man physically. I think Mary must have had some bad wine, for she told me that an angel had visited her. It sounded like a terrible hallucination to me, but she was so convincing and why would she lie to me? She said the angel told her the baby she was carrying was the Son of God! Now that's blasphemy and the priests would have no option but to publicly stone her to death for that and no mistake. For goodness sake, you can't catch pregnancy from an angel, if they ever exist in the first place! Yet, I love her so much and if I tell the priests she's pregnant or they see that she is before we are married they will not hesitate to make a public example of her. I will have to act quickly and discreetly if I am to save her from disgrace and death. Yet, I am afraid for my safety as well as hers; I must make the necessary arrangements to dismiss her without delay; I'll do it first thing in the morning.

That night Joseph falls into a deep sleep, much deeper than normal:...

Wow, did I just dream that or was it real? It felt real! Now I'm the one seeing angels and God help me, I heard them speaking! I have never had a dream like that in my life before and what's more, these angels had a message for me! Yet, it was real; I feel it in my spirit, what has happened to Mary really is the Lord's doing. That means the baby she's carrying really must be God's Son. Instead of arranging to quietly put Mary aside, I must marry her without delay. No one must know she is pregnant until after our marriage, especially not the priests. Mary is special, this baby is special and I must do all I can to protect them both. But the angel said the child must be named 'Jesus', which has the same meaning as 'Immanuel' 'God with us' how can that be? Would God Himself come to us as a tiny baby with all the vulnerability and limitations that incurs? And yet, the prophets have foretold of such an event, so it is in perfect accord with the words of holy Scripture written in the

scrolls. Isaiah prophesied that God's Child would save us all from the consequences of our sin, which is just what the angel said too. That definitely seems impossible, for some that come to mind more than for others! Well, I confess that I do not understand what it all means, but I believe the angel was sent by God and I believe what the angel said to me is True. I have heard and I will obey. Although it will take some resolve of self-control to carry it out, may God strengthen me for the task ahead, selah! I must tell Mary of this dream and assure her that I believe her and will support her and above all that everything will turn out well. There is no time to waste, I must make haste and get all things arranged.

**CD: In The Beginning: Track 11:** Barocha *by* Michael Card **Numbers 6:24**  
*2:43minutes – can be found on YouTube*

The Lord bless you and keep you  
The Lord Make His face shine upon you  
And give you peace  
And give you peace  
And give you peace forever

The Lord be gracious to you  
The Lord turn His face towards you  
And give you peace  
And give you peace  
And give you peace forever

**Closing Prayer:** God's Word is our guide; God's Son is our example; God's Holy Spirit is our inspiration through whom discernment comes; Let us look out for God's prophets, stay alert for God's warnings and blessings, that we may go in faith and obedience to serve God's Word and carry out His purpose. **Amen!**

\*\*\*\*\*