

Who is “the Prophet” in the Song “We Thank Thee Oh God for a Prophet”?

William Fowler wrote the lyrics to the LDS song *We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet*. Some believe “the Prophet” in this song is the Prophet Joseph Smith. Others believe it is Jesus of Nazareth, as Moses spoke of Christ the LORD as **The Prophet**, one like him who would come. Looking at the words of this song below we see that most of the words point to God the **Father** (the LORD God) or **His Son Jesus Christ** as “the Prophet”. In the prophecies of the coming Christ tied to this *title*, we are told to **hearken** to the words of **this Prophet** or we will be **cut off**.

The connection between the phrase “the Prophet” and **Christ the LORD** is made 7 times in the Bible (see Deut. 18:15 & 18:18; Acts 3:22 & 7:37; and John 1:25, 6:14 & 7:40). It is made 7 more times in 1st Nephi chapter 22. There Nephi quotes Moses in verses 20-21. It also features 7 total “Prophet” scriptures, 7 titles for Christ, and 7 descriptions of false churches in our day (v. 23). Four of the 7 “Prophet” verses in 1 Nephi 22 are tied to the **Prophet** Isaiah (vs. 2, 15, 17 & 23), as Isaiah’s words are quoted in the previous chapter (chap. 21). Then later in verse 23 of chapter 22 we read of 7 reasons why *men* and their false *churches* are built up - to 1. get gain, 2. get power over the flesh, 3. become popular in the eyes of the world, 4. seek the lusts of the flesh, 5. the things of the world, 6. do all manner of iniquity, and 7. and thus they belong to the kingdom of the devil). It is men and their *words* in these false churches that often replace **Christ the LORD** as our *guide*. Scripture tells us that we are to “give heed” or “hearken” to **Christ’s** words as **THE Prophet**, not men. “Those who will not hear” **His** words are “cut off”.

In the Bible books known as *The Law and The Prophets* (a reference to many of the books of the Old Testament) we find a number of ancient prophecies of **Christ** as this coming, important **Prophet** (like Isaiah chapter 53). **He** has many titles there and in 1st Nephi 22. Nephi gives us 7 different titles for **Jesus** in chapter 22, including (1) “the Holy One of Israel” (3 times), (2) “Redeemer”, (3) “the Mighty one of Israel”, (4) “the LORD”, (5) “Savior”, (6) “one shepherd”, and (7) he refers to Him as “a”, “that”, or “this Prophet”. **His** coming to earth was recorded in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. In both **He** was the **Good Shepherd**, the one willing to give **His** life for the sheep (see 1 Ne. 22:25; Psalm 23; John 10). Like Isaiah and Nephi, the **Prophet** Jeremiah spoke harshly of *false shepherds* in our day in Jeremiah 23 and 34. They *use* the sheep for their own *gain* and other evil purposes.

Primary Scriptures Tied to Christ as “The Prophet”

Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 This is the prophecy of Moses tied to a special coming “Prophet” – the LORD **Jesus**.

We are to “hearken” to the words of this very important “Prophet” or we will be **cut off** from **Him**.

1 Nephi 22:20-21 This **Prophet** is “the Holy one of Israel”, the one Moses spoke of. Those who don’t listen to **His** words will be “cut off”. **Jesus** is addressed as this **Prophet 3 times** in verses 20 and 21. The title “Prophet” is found 7 times in this same chapter.

3 Nephi 20:23 Here **Jesus** said, “I am he of whom Moses spake”. He then referred us to Moses’ words in Deut. 18:15 and 1 Ne. 22. Again, those who do not adhere to **His** words are **cut off** (see 3 Nephi 28:34).

JS Matthew 1:37-38 or JST Matthew 24:39-40 If you do not want to be *deceived* in the last-days, you must treasure up the **LORD’s** words, the one the **Prophet** Moses spoke of in Deut. 18:15, 18.

The words to the LDS song “*We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet*” point to **Christ** and the **Father** in the **bold** words of the three verses below. The LORD **Jesus** is **THE** special **Prophet** that Moses, Isaiah, Paul, John and other Bible **Prophets** said would be raised up for our **redemption**.

Words of the Song

Verse 1: We thank **thee**, O God [the Father], for a prophet [**THE Prophet Jesus**], To *guide* us in these latter days. We thank **thee** for sending the gospel, To lighten our minds with its rays. We thank **thee** for every blessing, Bestowed by **thy** bounteous hand. We feel it a pleasure to serve **thee**, And love to obey **thy** command.

Verse 2: When dark clouds of trouble hang o’er us, And threaten our peace to destroy, There is hope smiling brightly before us, And we know that **deliv’rance** is nigh. We doubt not **the Lord** nor **his** goodness, We’ve proved **him** in days that are past. The wicked who fight against Zion, Will surely be smitten at last.

Verse 3: We’ll sing of **his** goodness and mercy. We’ll praise **him** by day and by night, Rejoice in **his** glorious gospel, And bask in its life-giving light. Thus on to eternal perfection, The honest and faithful will go, While they who reject this glad message, Shall never such happiness know.

Text: William Fowler, 1830–1865; *Music:* Caroline Sheridan Norton, 1808–ca. 1877.