

Jesus: Prophet, Priest, King

“Part 1: The Prophet Who Reveals”

Selected Texts

Delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic via Livestream
at Central Baptist Church on December 6, 2020

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- **(SHOW SLIDE 1)** This morning I want to begin a new advent series for the next few weeks. So, let me do two introductions this morning. The first is to introduce the series and the second is to introduce today’s specific message.
- First, let me introduce the series because what we are going to talk about will likely be something new to you. So, I need to begin with some teaching and then I hope to show you how practical and life-changing this series will be.
 - This series is about what theologians call **(SHOW SLIDE 2) the threefold office of Christ. (SHOW SLIDE 3) Office = an official role or position.** An “office” is an official role or position that someone performs like when we talk about the office of the Prime Minister.
 - So we are *not* talking who Jesus is as the God-man; we are talking about what Jesus came to do. The answer is that he came to fulfill not just one role, but three. **(SHOW SLIDE 4) Christmas is about how God became a man in order to fulfill the office of a prophet, a priest, and a king.**
- Here’s the quick Bible background. In the Old Testament God gave these three offices as gifts to Israel. There were many prophets like Elijah and Isaiah. There were many priests like Aaron and all the Levites. And there were many kings like David and all his descendants. Why did Israel—and why do we—need these three offices? What’s the point of all this? It’s all very practical.
 - First, we need a prophet because our sin blinds us from seeing the truth about God and how to live in his world. A prophet reveals truth.
 - Second, we need a priest because we are guilty of sin and separated from God. A priest offers a sacrifice to reconcile a person to God.
 - Third, we need a king because we have proven that we cannot rule our own lives, let alone our world. God gave kings whose rule was supposed to bring good into the lives of people.
 - A prophet reveals. A priest reconciles. And a king rules.
- Yet, no one person in the Old Testament could act in all three offices. Even worse, those who filled the roles often failed, like king David who committed adultery and murder.
 - Oh for a prophet who could cure our ignorance by revealing truth to us! Oh for a priest who could cure our guilt and fully reconcile us to God! Oh for a king who could deliver us from our enemies and fix our world!
 - This is where the message of Christmas us such good news. The message of Christmas is that God became a man. But why would he do that? The answer is to rescue us by perfectly fulfilling all three offices. Jesus is the final and ultimate prophet. Jesus is the final and ultimate priest. And Jesus is the final and ultimate king.

- As we look at the threefold office of Christ, I am praying that we will gain a robust understanding of what Jesus came into the world to do. As our understanding grows, I am praying that our lives will be changed and our hearts will burst with praise as we say to each other, ***“O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.”***
 - So that is the introduction to the three part series on Jesus as our prophet, priest and king.

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY’S MESSAGE

- This morning we are going to look at **(SHOW SLIDE 5) Part 1 - Jesus: the prophet who reveals.** To introduce today’s message let me tell you about a little short story written by H.G. Wells entitled, “The Country of the Blind.”¹ In this story Wells tells about a remote tribe of people in a mountainous valley of South America. They are completely cut off from the world. A strange disease comes upon them causing everyone to go blind, even the newborn children. Eventually their eyeballs shrink away and their eyelids remain shut.
 - Wells writes, **(SHOW SLIDE 6) “When at last sight died out among them the race lived on. Generation followed generation. They forgot many things; they devised many things. Their tradition of the greater world they came from became mythical in colour and uncertain.”**
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 7)** Fourteen generations later a mountain climber named Nunez stumbles upon their secluded village. He calls out to a group of men only to realize they are blind. They ask him where he has come from. Nunez answers, ***“Over the mountains I come . . . out of the country beyond – where men see. From near Bogota.”***
 - When he speaks of Bogota and seeing they reply, ***“A wild man – using wild words. His mind has hardly formed yet. He has only the beginnings of speech.”***
- They take him to the elders. He tries to explain about the wider world, the sky, and the mountains, but as Wells writes, **(SHOW SLIDE 8) “They would understand nothing whatever that he told them. . . . For fourteen generations these people had been blind and cut off from the seeing world; the names for all things of sight had faded and changed; the story of the outer world was faded and changed to a children’s story. (SHOW SLIDE 9) Blind men of genius had arisen among them and questioned the shreds of belief and tradition they had brought with them from their seeing days, and had dismissed all these things as idle fancies and replaced them with new and saner explanations.”**
 - They now believed that their valley was the entire world. They believed the sky was a lid about 60 feet above the earth.
 - **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 10)** And they spoke of the angels ***“whom one could hear singing and making fluttering sounds, but whom no one could touch at all, which puzzled Nunez greatly until he thought of birds.”***
- Nunez tries to teach them about reality but they think he must be mentally unstable. Since Nunez’s eyes are so different from theirs, they conclude that his eyes must be

¹ <http://www.online-literature.com/wellshg/3/>

diseased and that this disease effects his brain so that he cannot understand reality correctly.

- They call for the doctors to save Nunez from this disease by removing his eyes. The story ends with Nunez fleeing the country of the blind.

WE LIVE ON THE PLANET OF THE BLIND

- This is a good picture of what the Bible describes is wrong with each of us and with the human race. The Bible says that we live on the planet of the blind. Not blind in the physical sense. But blind in the sense that we do not see reality correctly. The Bible teaches that in the beginning human being could see reality correctly. Adam and Eve could clearly answer questions such as, ***“Is there a God? What is God like? What is truth? Where did we come from? What is the meaning of life? What is right and wrong? How do we live in harmony with each other?”***
 - But that clear vision of reality did not last. They rebelled against God and were removed from his presence. Their minds became darkened. Human beings pushed aside the truth about God. Generation followed generation. Human beings forgot many things. We devised many things. The knowledge of God faded so that most people now consider the first few chapters of Genesis to be children’s stories.
 - What’s wrong with the world? To speak plainly, the Bible says our first big problem is that we are ignorant. We lack knowledge and understanding about what is true. We do not know who God is, what God is like, or how to truly live as human beings.
- You can see this ignorance and blindness so clearly in our day. One of the most frustrating things about our day is how many opinions there are on what is true and what is not.
 - There are so many world religions. How can you know which, if any, are true?
 - There are so many opinions on what is right and wrong? How do you decide?
 - There are so many viewpoints on what happens after death? Who can answer this?
- Add to this that it is very hard to trust what people in authority say. How tragic that we have had to invent fact checking systems for the presidential debate because we can’t implicitly trust what powerful men say.
 - I was on the ferry a few weeks ago and picked up this *Scientific American* magazine. **(SHOW SLIDE 11)** The title is, ***“Truth vs. Lies: it’s never more important to understand the science of misinformation and deception and how to know what’s real.”***
 - **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 12)** How is anyone supposed to know what is true when we live in an era of fake news, disinformation, and conspiracy theories? In short, how can you know what is true? Is there any way to cure our blindness so we can see reality correctly? Is there any way to gain true knowledge so we are not ignorant?

- The answer of the Bible is that we cannot do this on our own. But in his grace, God has provided a way to cure our blindness and teach us the truth. This cure comes in four stages through history.

THE PROPHETS: AGENTS OF REVELATION

- **(SHOW SLIDE 13)** First, God began to cure our blindness by teaching us truth through the ancient prophets.
 - What is a prophet? We often think a prophet is someone who foretells the future but that is only a small part of the office of prophet. **(SHOW SLIDE 14)** **A prophet is someone who hears from God and then speaks God’s words to people.**
- So in Exodus 7 God commanded Moses to speak to Pharaoh. Moses pleads with God for someone else to speak because he says he is not very eloquent. God concedes and says he will speak to Moses but then his brother Aaron will speak to Pharaoh. So we read,
 - **(SHOW SLIDE 15)** **And the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. ² You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. (Ex 7:1-2)**
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 16)** So a prophet is *not* a great man who is somehow smarter, or more God-conscious, or more enlightened than others and who then passes on his enlightened thoughts to others. The prophets are normal human beings. But in His grace, God called some people to the office of prophet. God then revealed certain truths to them and they in turn revealed these truths to people, thus beginning to cure their blind ignorance.
 - But here is why I say God only *began* to cure our ignorance through the prophets. The revelation they gave from God was incomplete. It is like their words moved us from blindness to a blurry view of reality. It is better than being blind but it is not 20/20.
- However, there is a key passage of scripture in Deuteronomy 18. It promises that God will raise up many to the office of prophet but it also raises the hope that one day a supreme prophet will come who will cure our blindness and teach us more fully.
 - Here is what Moses says: **(SHOW SLIDE 17)** ¹⁵ **“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen. . . .¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.”**
 - And so a great expectation arose on the planet of the blind concerning this future prophet, who was God’s Messiah, God’s chosen one. You can hear this expectation in the woman at the well. She says, **(SHOW SLIDE 18)** **“I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” (Jn 4:25)**
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 19)** So, to summarize so far, in the Old Testament era God revealed himself to everyday blind human beings called prophets and they in turn taught people about the true nature of reality under God. This is how God began to cure our

blindness. But their message was incomplete and only partial. They looked for a future prophet who would come as the ultimate prophet, the Prophet of prophets, the revealer of all things.

- This brings us to the second stage in how God cured our ignorance and healed our blindness.

JESUS: THE PROPHET OF PROPHETS

- **(SHOW SLIDE 20)** Secondly, God continued to cure our blindness by teaching us truth through Jesus, the final and ultimate prophet.
 - Why did God become a man? Why Christmas? The answer we are seeing today is to teach us truth; to open our eyes to see reality correctly. Jesus came to fulfill the office of prophet. Jesus is the long-promised prophet of Deuteronomy 18.
- This is why the writer to the Hebrews says, **(SHOW SLIDE 21)** “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son.” (Heb 1:1)
 - God identified Jesus as a prophet. You remember when he was transfigured on the mountain before Peter, John, and James, God spoke from heaven saying, **(SHOW SLIDE 22)** “This is my Son whom I have chosen; listen to him.” (Lk 9:35)
 - In Matthew 21:11 the crowds of people said, **(SHOW SLIDE 23)** “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”
- As a prophet, Jesus claimed to be speaking the very words of God. John 12:49 says, **(SHOW SLIDE 24)** “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. . . . So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”
 - This is what Christmas is all about for Jesus says that his prophetic ministry was the very reason he was born. **(SHOW SLIDE 25)** “For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth.” (Jn 18:37)
- Jesus is the final and ultimate prophet. He is greater than all the prophets who came before him. Why? Because of who he is. He is God in human flesh. As John writes, “*the Word became flesh and dwelled among us.*”
 - That is why John can write in John 1:18: **(SHOW SLIDE 26)** “No one has ever seen God, but God the one and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 27)** You see the Old Testament prophets prefaced all their words with what phrase? “*Thus says the Lord.*” But when Jesus speaks what does he say? “*Truly, truly I say unto you.*” How can he speak with such authority? Jesus is claiming to be the absolute teacher of all that is true and real. How can he say that?
 - Because Jesus is not just *a* prophet, He is *the* prophet.
 - He is not merely an inspired man teaching God’s words, He is *the* Word.
 - Jesus is not just *an* agent of revelation, He *is* the revelation.
 - Jesus did not just tell us *about* God, He *is* God.
 - Just like Nunez came into the country of the blind from the world beyond, Jesus came to earth from the world beyond. Just like Nunez was qualified to teach because he could see, Jesus is qualified to teach

because he is truth itself. When Jesus speaks you are hearing the voice of God. When Jesus teaches you are learning truth.

- Oh what good news! Do you struggle with all the many conflicting opinions and if God exists, what God is like, what is right and wrong, and what happens when we die? What you need is someone who can answer these things for you.
 - And this is the first reason Jesus came into the world – to teach us, to cure our blindness so we see reality correctly.
 - Perhaps you are not convinced of this yet. May I encourage you to read Jesus' words. Read the book of Luke this Christmas season and see what you think about his teaching.
- But God's cure for our blindness and ignorance does not end with Jesus' teaching ministry while he was on earth.

CHRIST CONTINUES HIS OFFICE AS PROPHET

- **(SHOW SLIDE 28)** Third, Christ continues to fulfill his office of prophet today through the Scriptures.
 - Jesus continued to reveal truth through his apostles who wrote down what the Spirit of Jesus taught them. Once the apostles laid the foundation of the church there was no further need for new revelation. God has not taught us everything but he has given us all we need to know in the Bible. After the Bible was finished the focus shifted. There are no more prophets. The focus is now on proclaiming and explaining the Word of God.
 - We help to carry on Jesus' prophetic office by preaching and teaching the Word of God. God has given pastors to the Church and they are charged to "preach the word" and to train up others to do the same. This is why the Bible is the centre of our church. This is why teaching and preaching are so important. And this is why individual believers read it, study it, and speak it to others as they are given opportunity.
 - We will have failed if we say this book is just another sacred book. We will have failed if we neglect it. We will have failed if we adjust its teaching to fit our culture. We will have failed if we dilute it or teach what is contrary to it.
 - The Bible is so precious to us because it is God's gift to open our eyes to see reality correctly and teach us what is true.
- You see when Jesus saves a person he restores their sight. We sing, "***I once was blind but now I see.***" Through the prophetic ministry of the prophets and Jesus we can see reality correctly. But even now we do not see with 20/20 vision. We do not see God. We are often deceived by wrong thinking.

THE FINAL AND COMPLETE CURE

- **(SHOW SLIDE 29)** Finally, when Christ returns we will be able to see reality clearly.
 - As Paul writes, **(SHOW SLIDE 30)** "**For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.**" (1 Cor 13:12).

- On that day Rev 22:5 says **(SHOW SLIDE 31)** “we will see his face.” What was lost in Eden will be restored. And all of this is accomplished through Jesus, the final and ultimate prophet.

APPLICATIONS

- Everything today comes to this: **(SHOW SLIDE 32)** **who defines truth for you?**
 - You see all of today comes down to where you get your ultimate answers to the meaning to life, how you define right and wrong, if there is a God, how to live rightly, and what happens when you die?
 - Who defines and decides what is true? Most people say they define it for themselves. But are you really qualified to do this? Speaking personally, I am just not that smart. Not only that I make a mess of my life and often make wrong judgements. But who is wise enough to define what is true?
 - The message of Christmas says that God became a man. He came to rescue you and I. The first thing he does is teach you. You learn that God exists, that you are a sinner, but that God is gracious and sent Christ to save you.
 - The question is, “what will you do with Jesus?” Will you treat as just another great teacher? Will you push him away as crazy? Will you reject him like so many people of his day? Or, will you listen to him?
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 33)** O come let us adore him! The message of Christmas begins here. God did not leave us in our blindness and ignorance. Rather, he sent His only Son into the world to teach us the truth about God, about sin, our need for salvation, and the hope we can have in him.
 - Jesus is the final and ultimate prophet. O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!