

Introduction...

¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is superior/more excellent than theirs.

Here in this opening paragraph to the book of Hebrews we are introduced to Jesus and since we are gathered here to worship Him this morning I thought it would be a good idea for us to try and understand what this text says about Him. Working backwards from verse 4, we learn that Jesus is superior to, He is greater than the angels and the name that He has inherited is more exceptional than theirs. The word “***superior/better***” is used 13 times in Hebrews to compare Jesus to what went before Him. That Jesus is better is a key theme of this book and here at the start God wants us to know that Jesus is much superior to the angels. As powerful and amazing as the angels are, Jesus is better.

In verse 3, we learn that He has taken his seat at the right hand of God’s throne. Jesus sits on a throne in the place of chief honor beside the Majesty on high. In other words, Jesus is sitting in the throne room that governs the universe and He is the king in waiting who rules over all. This position, this title was His by right, as the Son of God, but He also claimed it when He accomplished the task given to Him. He was given the task of making purification for sin.

The sin that entered the world through the Garden, the sin that spread through the hearts of every generation of mankind, the sin that separates us from God, the sins of all God’s people; by Jesus work on the cross that sin has been cleansed, washed away. He provided the remedy for our defilement by offering up His own life to set us free.

In the middle of verse 3 we learn that by His command the universe stays in place, the stars continue to burn and shine, the planets continue in their orbiting course and life as we know it is sustained. Jesus is the strong nuclear force (ie. The nuclear glue) holding the nucleus of atoms together and if He were to let them go, the universe would dissolve in moment.

If you could look upon His face, you would find yourself looking into the face of God. If you tried to look upon Him, you would have to shield your eyes to see beyond the shining glory of God that radiates from Him like the consuming fire of the sun in its full strength. He is the radiance of the glory of God.

He was the construction supervisor for the creation of the universe and He is set to inherit the very universe that He made. When you hear Him speak, you are hearing the voice of God and His voice is the final and definitive voice.

As we look at this passage we see a handful of wonderful truths about Jesus but there is something in particular that I want to discuss with you this morning. **In this passage, we also see a three-fold description of the work of Jesus as a Prophet, Priest and King. He is the prophet through whom God has spoken His final word; He is the priest who has accomplished a perfect work of cleansing for His people's sins; and He is the King who sits enthroned in the place of honor alongside God the Father.**

Transition...

Over the next few weeks I want us to focus on Christ's fulfillment of these three roles and this morning we are going to learn about His role as the final Prophet of God.

Sermon Focus...

In the OT, prophets priest and king were three separate offices that God established and these offices served as mediators between God and the people of God. The prophets spoke the Word of God to the people, the priest offered sacrifices, prayers and even praises to God for the people, and the king ruled over the people as a representative of God. At times there were faithful prophets, priests, and kings; and as we know there were also wicked ones who failed in their office. But each of these offices foreshadowed the One who was to come. The One who would execute these offices with finality; that's where Jesus comes into this discussion.

In Christ, these three offices come together and are fulfilled. As our Prophet, Jesus speaks the Word of God to us and He also reveals God to us. As our Priest, Jesus offers Himself as a sacrifice to God for us that ends all sacrifices. As our King, Jesus rules over the church and all of creation.

Let's look at His role as Prophet.

I. God Has Spoken to Us in His Son (V. 2)

As we open our Bibles we learn very quickly that our God speaks. In **Genesis 1**, we learn that He spoke creation into existence. God's word is powerful and true and this is a theme throughout the book.

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. ⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. ⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! ⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

Our God speaks and things happen; but He also speaks to men and He speaks to His people through those men called prophets. Moses was the first prophet of God and after him there was a line of prophets all the way to Malachi in the OT and then John the Baptist in the NT. These prophets were anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and they spoke or wrote God's message to God's people.

But there was a lingering promise that came through Moses, about a special prophet that God would send one day.

Deut 18:15 "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.

Fast forward to the New Testament and you see that people are discussing whether or not Jesus is that prophet. The woman at the well discovered that Jesus was a prophet when he told her everything that she had ever done. The people were trying to figure out who Jesus was and they guessed, "Some say you are John the Baptist, other say Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the *prophets (Matt 16:14)*." But Peter puts all the questions to rest in **Acts 3** when He reminds the people of Moses' promise and declares that Jesus is the one who fulfilled that promise.

Jesus is a prophet of God, the greatest of the prophets and He was also more than a prophet. He is the One prophet that all the other prophets were pointing to. He is the One prophet who fulfills all the promises and prophecies that God ever gave to His people. He is the One prophet who not only speaks the Word of God but who *is* the Word of God.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jesus was not only a messenger bringing revelation from God, He was the *source* of revelation from God (Grudem 626) and we see this even in the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus says, "***Truly I say to you.***" Jesus uses this phrase all the time and when He does He is drawing our attention to His authority not simply as a messenger of God but as the Son of God.

When Old Testament prophets spoke a word of prophecy to the people they would introduce it with the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord" and this showed that they weren't speaking on their own authority, they were speaking on the authority of God. God was speaking through them.

Jesus uses a different phrase, "Truly, *I* say to you..." He is a prophet like no other because He ***doesn't simply speak for God, He speaks as God.*** He is a faithful witness to God's truth, because He is God's Word in the flesh.

But why was it necessary for God to send us His Word in the flesh? Why were the prophets of Old not enough? To answer this question I want us to take a theological tour.

II. *Munus Triplex* – The Three-Fold office and the Triple Cure

It was **John Calvin** who brought the three-fold office of Christ into prominence during the reformation. He wasn't the first to write on it, the early church fathers and Catholic theologians referred to the work of Christ in these three distinct ways (prophet, priest and king). But Calvin set out to show how Christ not only served in these roles but did so as a means to completely satisfy our need of salvation, where the Catholic teachers left that need unfulfilled.

Calvin understood that Jesus's fulfillment of the three-fold office was tied to His title as the Messiah or the ***Anointed One of God***. "Under the law, prophets as well as priests and kings were anointed with holy oil. Hence, the illustrious name of "Messiah" was bestowed upon the one promised mediator," who fulfilled all three anointed offices of the Old Testament.¹

But another Reformed theologian, named **Francis Turretin**, who introduced the threefold office of Christ as the divinely revealed cure to man's threefold disease of ignorance, guilt, and pollution. Turretin taught that Christ serving in the triple office, as prophet, priest, and king, was necessary to accomplish the ***Triple Cure*** to our fatal ***three-fold disease***."

We don't like to think of ourselves as ignorant, but the Bible points out that man lives in a ***state of ignorance*** that is brought on by our sin.

"God saw that every intention of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually (**Gen 6:5**)."

"We did not honor God or give thanks to God, but our foolish hearts were darkened and we exchanged the glory of the immortal God (**Rom 1:21**)."

"We were blinded by the god of this world, kept from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (**2 Cor 4:4**)."

As a result of this we are like blind men stumbling through life ignorant to the truth of God and to ***the guilt that we bear*** as sinners.

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

¹ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Vol 1, Book 2 (pg. 495-6)

But why is this true? Why have we sinned and become guilty before God? Because ***the sin in our hearts has infected every part of us.***

You were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind (**Eph 2:1-3**).

These are the descriptions of our disease, the explanation of our corruption. The disease itself is sin and its prognosis is fatal. All of humanity is infected with it and earthly doctors have no cure because with man it is impossible. But with God all things are possible.

Our threefold misery of ignorance, guilt and bondage to sin are addressed and overcome by the threefold cure of Christ our prophet, priest and king.

Ignorance is healed by the prophetic; guilt by the priestly; the corruption of sin by the kingly office. Prophetic light scatters the darkness of error; the merit of the Priest takes away guilt and secures reconciliation for us; the Power of the King removes the bondage of sin and death. The Prophet shows God to us; the Priest leads us to God; and the King joins us together and glorifies us with God.²

There is one more thing I want us to see related to Christ's role as our prophet and it is something that only He alone could help us to see.

III. Christ's Role as our Prophet (Luke 4:16-21)

Christ's role as our prophet means that He is representing God to man. He is shedding light on the love of the Father and the plan of the Father for ruined sinners like us. Like the prophets of old, Jesus serves as a prophet by speaking the word of God to us. But, the fact that He is God in flesh should give us a clue that His role as prophet will not simply be contained in the words that He speaks but also in the life that He lives.

I want us to look at **Luke 4**, where Jesus not only speaks the Word of God in a very interesting way but He also points us to what He will accomplish for us.

Luke 4:16-21 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

The setting for this chapter is that Jesus has already begun his ministry of preaching the good news in the synagogues around Galilee. But on this day, He has come home to the synagogue in Nazareth and it is easy to imagine the excitement about His arrival. All of His friends, neighbors and family have gathered around to see if all the stories are true. Not to

² <https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ—our-prophet-priest-and-king> {Francis Turretin, Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2 (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1994), p. 393.}

mention the fact that there is probably a great deal of pride on their part that one of their own has been called out to be a prophet to the nation.

There hadn't been a prophet in Israel for several hundred years until John the Baptist stepped out and now the word is that Jesus might be a prophet as well. This is a local boy made good kind of story. So everybody is crowding into the synagogue because Jesus is in town and they want to hear what He is going to say.

Luke 4:17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

This verse is really interesting because many scholars believe that synagogues at this time followed a regular schedule of reading through the Scriptures but Jesus searches the scroll of Isaiah until he finds the passage He wants to read. He came into synagogue on the Sabbath with a particular message to preach. So when the time came he stood up and read this...

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." **Luke 4:20** And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

This is not only the message of Jesus but His mission as well. This is why Jesus has come, to fulfill the promises made about Him through the prophets. Or you could say that He has come to fulfill the promises *that He has made about Himself*. Let me explain, this passage comes from **Isaiah 61:1-2** where the Anointed Servant of the Lord is speaking about what He will do when He comes.

This section of Isaiah is understood to be the future Messiah speaking about His Mission. So when Jesus stands up to read this passage He is literally speaking about himself. He is quoting Himself and declaring the reason He has come and everything He declares He will also accomplish.

But what did He say?

1. He came with the anointing of the Spirit of God and He displays the power of God...we see that taking place in two ways: 1. He was anointed by the Spirit at His baptism and 2. He walked in the power of the Spirit throughout His life performing signs and wonders which only God can accomplish. What this means is that Jesus is the **Anointed One** of God.

2. He came to bring good news to the poor... Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom to all who would listen and He calls them to respond with a humble heart to the good news. This verse is not saying that the gospel is exclusively for those who don't have money; the idea of poverty here is related to those who are poor in spirit. He is preaching good news to those who will humbly receive His word and this message is still being preached today.

Friend, if you come to the gospel of Jesus with a hard heart and an arrogant spirit you will walk away like the Pharisees boasting in self-righteousness on your way to Hell. But if you come to the gospel with humility, the knowledge that you cannot save yourself, and you cry out for mercy; you will find it in Jesus. He delivers what He promises.

3. He came to set the captives free... This is not the language of political revolution but a prophetic word of spiritual transformation. Jesus has come to proclaim forgiveness from sin and freedom from the law of sin and death. **We do not simply need to be set free from individual sins and bad habits; we need to be transformed and set free from Satan's control.**

4. He came to give sight to the blind... we could easily read this and take note of those for whom Christ restored their physical sight; but the point is much deeper. **The Scriptures say that Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they might not see the glory of God in the face of Christ and Jesus has come to strip those blinders off our eyes so that we can see and be set free. He doesn't just declare the truth, but He gives us eyes to see that truth and hearts that are eager to accept it.**

5. He came to liberate the oppressed... This carries a couple of ideas: Jesus came to liberate those men and women who had been abused under the legalism of their religious leaders. He came to liberate those who had been oppressed by demonic forces. Jesus does not simply come and promise liberty for the oppressed, He actually delivered and still does.

6. He proclaimed and ushered in the year of the Lord's favor... This verse ties in to the Old Testament concept of the Year of Jubilee which was a time when everybody got to start over. If you had to sell your land because of debt or some family tragedy, in the year of Jubilee you would get it back. If you had to sell your possessions to your neighbor because of hard times, in the year of Jubilee you would get it all back. **If you were weary from working and laboring for year after year, in the year of Jubilee you could rest and God would make the fields grow in abundance. Jesus has come to usher in the year of Jubilee, which means that it is time to celebrate.**

Here's what that means for us spiritually, Jesus not only preached Good News but in His death, burial and resurrection He made that news good. He atoned for our sin. Jesus died in the place of sinners and paid the ransom price to make us free and this becomes

the foundation for our celebration. **God's favor is poured out on all those who receive Christ as savior and Lord. We don't work for our salvation because the work has already been done. It is Finished! Let the celebration begin.**

He told them *"Today this passage is fulfilled in me."*

Conclusion...

In His role as the final prophet of God, Jesus came to reveal His plan to us but in His role as the Savior of the world He came to accomplish this for us. As our prophet, He not only announced an end to our sin but He made an end to our sin. He not only announced the love of the Father but showed us the love of the Father.

Jesus fulfilled His role as our prophet but He also fulfilled His role as our redeemer. He does more than prophecy about these good things, He has come to give us these good things. He not only preaches Good News but He makes that news Good. He not only talks about a celebration, He has given us an invitation to the party.