

All-Sufficient Savior – Prophet, Priest, and King

Our confession on the subject of faith and repentance says that we receive Jesus as our “*prophet, priest, and king, as the only all-sufficient savior.*” So, as we work towards Easter Sunday next week, I want to preach two sermons showing how Jesus is our prophet our priest and our king, displayed in both the cross (this week) and the resurrection (next week). (Speak to Rhodes’ book as idea for sermon).

Before we move specifics on the cross, let’s go back to Adam for a moment. Did you know that Adam was also a prophet, a priest, and a king. These words are not found in the first three chapters of Genesis to describe Adam. Nevertheless, Adam was the first prophet, priest, and king. Let’s think about this a little more. Adam was the first king of this world. In Gen. 1:26 God said, “**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have DOMINION over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over ALL THE EARTH and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**” Adam is given dominion, or rule, over the earth. He is the king. Only God stands above him. And his responsibility is to ruler over creation as God’s regent, God’s king.

Adam was also the first prophet in this world. Prophets speak God’s words to God’s people. And Adam received this task from God. In Gen. 2:15-17 we read: “**The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**” At first glance you may not notice the connection with prophet. But, at this time, Eve was not yet created. But later, who would tell her God’s commands. It was Adam as God’s prophet. Only Adam had received God’s words. And his responsibility as God’s prophet was to tell Eve . . . and their children and their children, etc. the Words of God.

Adam was also the first priest. This may be the easiest to overlook with Adam. But, out of the entire created world, God put Adam in charge of a special place . . . the Garden of Eden. And this was the special place where God met with Adam, and later with Eve. I believe this was the first temple, the place God met with Adam and Eve. In the OT the tabernacle and the temple were both designed as mini replicas of the Garden of Eden. And, Adam was the “keeper” of the Garden. This same word is used in the OT to describe the priests. And what is the work of a priest, but to take care of the worship and holiness around the temple. For Adam, this was also his primary task . . . He was to keep the garden (temple) holy. He must protect the place of God’s presence from all evil.

In these ways, Adam was our prophet, priest, and king. But, as we look back upon the fall, was Adam a successful PROPHET? When Satan came, did he speak the Words of God to Eve as her prophet? Did he say to her, “*You shall not listen to Satan, you shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?*” As God’s KING, did he rule over all creatures and conquer the serpent? Did he “crush” the snake as he entered the garden and spoke to his wife? As God’s PRIEST, did he keep the garden; did he protect the temple, the special place where God met with them? Did he guard proper worship and the holiness of God as the serpent questioned God’s Words? No! As Eve took the fruit, he joined in her rebellion as a false prophet, a defeated king, and an unclean priest! Sin entered the world. Adam’s children and all humanity became blind to

the truth about God, ignorant of his glory and his goodness. Today as fallen humanity, we are guilty and unclean, stained by the corruption of sin, enslaved to Satan and our own distorted passions. Therefore, we need a true prophet to open our eyes. We need a priest to cleanse us from sin. We need a king to conquer death and the devil. In short, we need an all-sufficient Savior. In all the ways Adam failed, we need another Adam. And we do! With this in mind, let's turn our attention to the cross of Christ and see how Jesus fulfills the office of prophet, priest, and king on our behalf.

1. Jesus is the true prophet. In Luke 13:33 Jesus calls himself a prophet. As he looks to his work on the cross, He says "***I must go to Jerusalem . . . for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.***" As Jesus thinks of his prophetic ministry as a preacher, he says in 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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor . . .**" The people of Israel were expecting a prophet, ONE greater than Moses. (Deut. 18:15-18). In Peter's second sermon after Pentecost, he identifies Jesus as this prophet (Acts 3:22-23). Today, Jesus is the true prophet of God, who came to fulfill what Adam could not.

Now, someone might think, "*God gave Adam his words. And later God gave his words to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and all the other prophets. So why did Jesus also have to be a prophet?*" The short answer is this: Jesus came to show us the Father (John 14:8-11). Adam could never really show us the Father; as the first prophet, he could only give us words, he could only tell us what God had revealed to him. But, not so with Jesus. He is God in the flesh. As John says, "**In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God . . .**" (John 1:1). Adam could never bridge that gulf between us and God; ONLY The Son could do that in his incarnation. Only the Son could say, "***If you've seen me, you've seen the Father.***" Christ in his human nature is a perfect revelation of God on a human level. He is not a prophet only by the words he speaks; but by Who He is as He speaks. He is God in the flesh. And if you've seen Jesus, you've seen the Father.

With this in mind, let's move to the cross for a moment and ask, "*What does the cross have to do with Jesus the true prophet?*" Well, the cross is not just about his priestly work. The cross stands at the heart of his prophetic ministry. How? It is because the cross preaches to us. The cross is the PULPIT OF CHRIST. There is great riches in this truth! And I will only touch the surface; but the cross is the place where Christ practices what he has preached. Everything he has said about the Father, everything he has said about God in general is displayed! For example: In the cross we see the love of God. "**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son . . .**" In the cross we see that God has not abandoned his people. In the cross we see that God keeps his promises; God keeps his covenant with Israel and with the world. In the cross we see the mercy and grace of God. "**While we were yet sinners (enemies), Christ died for us**" (Rom. 5:8). We see the justice of God as he will not let sin go unpunished.

The cross of Christ is also our example. As our prophet, Christ shows us what is true humility, what is true service, what it looks like to be meek and mild. The cross is our example of suffering. The cross shows us what is truly important in this world. The cross preaches how we should live and treat one another. I think of Phil. 2:3-8 which says, "**Do nothing from selfish**

ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

2. Jesus is the True Priest. Honestly, when we consider the cross, the priesthood of Jesus is what we (I) think about most. Even up to reading *Man of Sorrows King of Glory*, I am not sure I've really thought much about how the cross preaches and displays Jesus as prophet. The cross involves punishment and death. The cross for the Christian is a place of sacrifice. It is the fulfillment of the old Levitical priesthood, the only difference is that Jesus is not only the priest, he is also the sacrifice.

Think about Adam, the first priest. It was his responsibility to guard the worship of God in the garden temple. It was Adam's responsibility to lead Eve (and their children and their children, etc.) to worship and approach God in the right way, according to the Words of God. And before the fall, there was no sacrifice of death needed; there was no sacrificial system, no shedding of blood, no tabernacle, no building, etc. It was only after the fall, as Adam failed in his role of priest, that we find death and even God himself as the first "priest" who took the skins of animals to clothe Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:23). And later with the first priest under Mosaic law we find Aaron, appointed to be God's representative to the people of Israel (Lev. 8:12).

Aaron the high priest would wear a breastplate containing twelve gemstones, one for each tribe of Israel, as well as two onyx stones on his shoulders engraved in the same way. And once a year carries these into the holy of holies. In this way, he served as Israel's priest, carrying them into the holy place of God (Ex. 28:6-21). Do you see the picture? As our true priest, Jesus carries us into the heavens; He takes us to God.

Now, in order for Jesus to be a priest, three things were needed: 1) He must be a man, just like Adam, just like us. 2) He must offer a sacrifice for sin. And 3) His priestly work must primarily be directed to God. Let's consider these for a moment. 1) He must be a man. Adam was a man. He was created by God with a purpose. Which was . . .? He was created to display the glory of God, to multiply and have dominion over the earth. And in this dominion, to listen to God's commands and teach the world about him; to spread the glory of God over the earth. Well, Adam fell into sin; death and enmity and separation from God entered the world. This created the greatest of all problems? How? Well, Adam failed. And, all his children, all his offspring also fail. Why? We inherit his sin nature. (Just look around; look to yourself, look at this world).

With the Sons of Adam, there is no true priest. But God promised in Gen. 3:15 that "*one would come from the woman*" and take care of this problem. I think of the Apostle John when he recalls his vision in heaven. **"Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to**

look into it. And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” This is the man, the priest, Christ Jesus.

2) A priest must offer a sacrifice for sin. Now, Adam before the fall did not offer sacrifices for sin. And after the fall, he was disqualified. He was a sinner. Therefore, God must send a man, a qualified man! This is why the “*blood of bulls and goats can never atone for sin*” (Heb. 10:4). ADAM, nor his children cannot do this! WE cannot do this! But, of the Lord Jesus we read: “**For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself**” (Heb. 7:26-27). On the cross, when Jesus says, “*It is finished*” it really is finished. In his death, He really did atone for sins. If you are in Christ today, your sins are forgiven.

3) A priest must direct his service toward God. In the Garden, even Adam’s work was directed toward God. His focus, his attention, his heart, was on God and his instructions, God and his holiness, God and his love for him (and so much more). Well, after the fall, what happened in God’ relationship with Adam? He is kicked out of the Garden; He is banished, never to go back again, never to draw close and eat of the tree of life again! Why? Because he lost his creaturely “holiness” in the fall. This sinful man could no longer be in the presence of a holy God. This is why the priests under Moses could not completely fulfill their task. This is why their sacrifices were weekly, monthly, and once a year into the holy of holies. Unless God were to send a sinless priest, there would be no end to that system. But of Jesus we read: “**For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin**” (Heb. 4:15). In the cross Jesus takes away our sins. But, He also takes away the wrath of God, the enmity of God, the displeasure of God. This is why, in his humanity he can cry out, “*God, why have you forsaken me?*” This is why in his humanity, we know that it “**pleased the Father to crush the son**” (Is. 53:10). Today, Jesus is our priest. And ONLY He can do this!

3. Jesus is the true king. How would you fill in the sentence . . . “Jesus came to do _____?” What would you say. I think most Christian’s answers would be, “*Jesus came to save me from my sins?*” And, this is certainly right. But this answer is very relational as it thinks about “me.” And, this answer, I think, mostly deals with Jesus as our priest. But, as we’ve seen, Jesus is also our prophet. He came to show us the Father, who He is, what is like, and what He requires of us. And, Jesus is our king. He came to reign. How? He came to conquer, his, and all our enemies. If we go back to Adam, the first king, he failed in his task. He should have ruled over the garden-temple and ruled the world by crushing the serpent and protecting this world.

As Adam failed, Christ did not! Rhodes says: “*The incarnation was an invasion, the beginning of the heavenly incursion to restore harmony by defeating sin, death, and the devil.*” Let me read God’s promise from Gen. 3:15. “**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.**” In this promise we see both a declaration of war and a promise of victory. So my question is: “*How does the cross display and declare Jesus as the true King?*” First, on the cross, Jesus

conquered sin. Unlike Adam (and us), Jesus obeyed the law of God in every respect, both in his heart and in his actions. And as a sinless man, He laid down his life on the cross, and he conquered sin. He took the penalty of sin's power and God's wrath upon himself in our place. He died the death we deserve. **"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"** (2 Cor. 5:21). But he rose again as death could not hold him (next week). And he conquered the devil. He crushed the head of Satan, destroying his power. The "strong one" is bound and one day will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. As the Apostle John says, **"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil"** (1 John 3:8). And Paul tells us in Col. 2 that our **"sins are nailed to the cross"** and **"he has disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame."**

This means, because of the cross, Jesus is our king. He has conquered sin, death, and the devil. If you are a Christian today, your sins are forgiven. Death has no hold on you. Satan can do nothing to you. He can't even accuse you or threaten you with death any longer. There is much more I could say about his "reigning." But, that will have to wait until next week.

For today, the CROSS of Christ displays Jesus as an all-sufficient savior. He is our prophet, our priest, and our king. This means we/you need him in all these ways. You need him as prophet to tell you about God and how to live (Bible). You need him as priest to take away your sins and the displeasure of God. You need him as king to conquer all God's enemies and rule heaven and earth.