

The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Last week we considered the cross, particularly how the cross displays Jesus as our prophet, our priest, and our king. Our first prophet, Adam did not fulfill his role as prophet. He failed to protect Eve, the Garden of Eden, and the world from the serpent by not TELLING them the Word of God. Our first priest Adam did not guard the worship and holiness of God by protecting the temple-Garden of Eden. As our first king, Adam failed to rule over this world. He should have “crushed” the head of the serpent and ruled over the Garden, his wife, and the world. In all these ways he failed. But Jesus, our true prophet, priest, and king did not fail. As our prophet, he really shows us Father and preaches God’s Word to us. And the cross is the pulpit of Christ. As our priest, Jesus did not fail. He is our true representative as the “sinless” Son of God, Son of man, He is both priest and sacrifice. As our king, on the cross, he conquered sin, death, and the devil. He takes away our sins. He takes away the wrath of God. That was last week! That was the cross!

Today, on Easter, let’s turn our attention to the resurrection as I try to and show that in Jesus’ resurrection and ascension to heaven and the right of the Father, Jesus is our true prophet, priest, and king.

1. The Risen Christ as Prophet. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus assures that his work as prophet continues, now and forever. It is pretty simple: A dead Christ is a false prophet. How can he continue as prophet if he is dead. The Westminster Larger Catechism says: *“it is obvious that a permanently dead Jesus falls woefully short in his prophetic office, for he cannot reveal to the church, in all ages by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.”* Without the resurrection and ascension there is no continued prophetic work. Without the resurrection there is no power, no real authority, no life-giving Spirit to carry on the work now.

Turn with me to John 14. These words are spoken right before the cross. For the first time Jesus tells the disciples that he is going away. And then he says in v. 12: **“Because I am going away, you will do greater works.”** Why is this? Look at v. 16: **“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.”** Who is this helper? It is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth (v. 17). He then says in v. 28 **“I will not leave you as orphans.”** We get this picture! If parents die or leave their children, they are orphans without a family. This is a picture for us. Though Jesus dies, he never leaves us! Why? Look down at v. 25-26: **“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all that I have said to you.”**

Brothers and sisters, ALL the prophets, all the teachers, all the preachers of all the religions of the world are all dead. All of them leave their followers as orphans. But not so with the Christian! As our true prophet, He rose from the dead. He ascended to the right of the Father in majesty where He will never leave. He is always our prophet! The giving of the Holy Spirit is a consequence of the resurrection, not the cross. (Now, they are still connected. For, if Jesus is not true prophet, priest, and king at the cross, nothing is applied to us in power because of the resurrection.) But, the Holy Spirit comes down ONLY because Jesus has gone up! Otherwise, we

are just like all the other religious people in this world; we are left as “orphans.” Jesus executes his office of prophet by sending the Holy Spirit. For us today, this means the activity of Christ and the activity of the Spirit are the same. The reason He does not leave us is because He comes to us in the Spirit! This is his prophetic role, which does not happen without the resurrection.

Application: We don’t need a “physical” Jesus for people to come to faith. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8).

Application: In the church now, since Jesus is alive and sits at the right hand of God, he now works in the church by the Word and by the Spirit. This will not change. There is no possibility of failure. People will get saved; and these same people will be taught.

Application: The Spirit applies the Word of God in a powerful way. I think of the Thessalonians as Paul says, “**For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction**” (1 Thess. 1:4-5). This truth should change the way we sing songs that contain the Word. This must change the way you listen to a sermons. John Calvin says, “*When someone goes up into the pulpit . . . it is so that god should speak to us by the mouth of men and should favour us with his presence.*” Martin Luther says, “*Tis a right excellent thing, that every honest pastor’s and preacher’s mouth is Christ’s mouth.*” As parents it should affect your reading of the Word in your family worship or at the dinner table. It must affect our boldness as we share with our neighbors, family members, co-workers, and friends.

Application: It affects our prayer life as we “pray the Word” knowing God will answer.

All of this is because of the resurrection and ascension. He is still our prophet!

2. The Risen Christ as Priest. Now, when we think of Christ the priest our attention is immediately drawn to the fact that Jesus is our mediator. As 1 Tim. 2:5 says: “**For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . .**” He is our representative. Think back to Adam. As the first priest of the Garden-Temple, he was given the responsibility to guard the worship of God and protect the place of God’s presence from all evil, and to lead his family He was God’s representative, God’s “*mediator.*” Later, with the first priest Aaron, he was also given this role. As he wore the breastplate with 12 stones, representing the tribes of Israel, as priest, it was his role alone to go into the holy of holies and “carry” God’s people as their mediator, their representative.

In the same way, Jesus is our priest. He is our mediator. He is our representative. This is why the Apostle Peter says, “**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**” (1 Peter 2:24). This is the cross of Christ. This is Good Friday. As we look to the cross, Jesus is our priest. He laid down his life as a sinless sacrifice. And those who trust in him find their sins forgiven, the wrath of God taken away. He accomplished what Adam and Aaron and all the priests of the old covenant failed to do. And, because of the cross, we have all the benefits associated with salvation. BUT, my question is this? What happens to the priesthood of Christ if there is no resurrection? Have you ever thought of that? If Christ is not alive now, who is our representative now? Who is our mediator now? Who enters the Holy of Holies now? Who applies the benefits of heaven to the subjects of the kingdom now? Brothers and sisters, we know the answer? It is Christ! Now! He

rose from the dead! And where does he sit? Heb. 1:3: **“After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”** This means Jesus is our priest NOW. He is our representative NOW. He is our mediator NOW. And, this work as a priest, because of the resurrection and ascension, secures for us all the blessings of God FOREVER.

This is one of the truths of the Book of Hebrews. Though the resurrection is only referenced directly one time (13:20), there are scores of verses that demonstrate Jesus is a priest forever because of the resurrection and ascension! In other words, at his resurrection and ascension Christ is appointed to this position. This did not happen on the cross. He was appointed priest forever because of the resurrection and ascension.

Look over at 5:5-9. **“So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; 6 as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.”** (And if we had time, we would go back and show how the Apostles use Ps. 2 and Ps. 110 to prove this fact.) Also, look over at 7:16 which says, He **“has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.”**

So, what does this mean for you/us? Because Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father ALL the benefits of the cross are yours. And this forever! Let me say it negatively: If there is no resurrection/ascension there are no continued benefits. His priesthood is not complete! If He were to remain dead, his priesthood is not forever, his life is not “indestructible.” As our priest, He must carry us to heaven and keep us there. This is why Paul can say in Eph. 2:4-7: **“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”**

This means that because of the resurrection and ascension the immeasurable riches of his grace will always be poured out on us/you. Jesus will always be our priest! He will always be our mediator. He will always represent us before the Father. Look over at Heb. 7:25:

“Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” This means that you will always find favor with God. Your sins are forgiven, the favor of God is upon you, never to end. Are your sins too great? No! You have a priest, an advocate. Do you feel insecure? Why? Your eternal position is secure. Has your family abandoned you? Maybe your earthly family. But, because Christ is your priest in heaven, you are child of God. Do you fear death? Why? He is risen. Oh death, **“where is your sting?”** He has been given a resurrected body . . . forever. One theologian says *“the dust of the earth is on the throne of the majesty on high.”* Do you feel you can’t go on? Why? Your high priest, the Lord Jesus, is praying for you. **“A bruised reed he will**

not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench” (Is. 42:3). “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 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. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

3. The Risen Christ as King. As we look back to Adam as God’s first king, what do we find? He should have crushed the serpent in the garden; he should have protected Eve from the devil. But he did not. And as we move through the Bible, we see both the kings of the nations and the kings of Israel. And some (in a manner of speaking) were very good; most bad. But, because of sin, and the sin natures coming down to them (and us), they would all fall short of the King needed to take us to heaven. This is why the OT always speaks of a man who will come one day, a king who will rule as Adam and all the other kings of the earth did not. This king would come from tribe of Judah, as one of the “sons” of David.

In short, all God’s promises from Genesis-Malachi converge upon one person. And of this man, his rule will be universal (Ps. 72:8; Is. 9:7; Zech. 9:10). His rule will be everlasting (2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 21:4; Ps. 72:17; Ps. 89:36-37; Jer. 33:17). All of his enemies will be subdued and destroyed (Num. 24:19; Ps. 2:9; Ps. 89:22-23; Ps. 110; Ps. 132:18). By Him, All God’s people are delivered (Ps. 72; Is. 11:4, 42:3; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:23; Mic. 5:4-5). Through his reign righteousness and peace and salvation will be given to all nations (Gen. 49:10; Ps. 72:16-17; Zech. 9:10; Is. 11:20; 42:1, 4; 49:6).

Now, I must ask, “*At what point does Jesus enter into his Davidic kingship?*” Well, we know, as the Son of God, He has always been king. But, when does he “sit down” on his throne and begin his rule. From this perspective, this happened at his resurrection and then his ascension. I think of Queen Elizabeth II who became the queen upon the death of her father in Feb. 1952. But, she was not crowned until the following year. In the same way Christ was king at his incarnation, but he was crowned at the resurrection and ascension. Easter morning is the Royal Coronation service!

In Rom. 1:3-4 Paul says: “**concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.**” In Peter’s first sermon after the resurrection, speaking of the King from David’s line, he says: “**Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ.**”

Today, Jesus is King. He is alive. He reigns now, until all his enemies are put under his feet. Whether the people of this world recognize his kingship or not, He IS KING! And though this world is still full of sin, and Satan is still alive, we are commanded to take up the full armor of God in this world. This is why Paul can say now, we are “*seated with him in the heavenly places.*” And, what are our marching orders. In Matt. 28:18-20 Jesus says, “**ALL AUTHORITY is given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples.**” This is what we must do. Did you know that in Christ, we are prophets, we are priests, and we are kings. And because our Lord has risen from

the dead and has inaugurated his kingdom and his reign, we give thanks that our labor is not in vain. We are more than victorious, even now, with our King, who is the King of this world and the King of the Church.

Let me end with a benediction from Heb. 13:20-21: **“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!”**