

**Christ as Prophet** First Wednesday in Advent (Midweek 1) November 30, 2005 Text: LSC #125

This year our theme for Advent is *Christ as God/man, Prophet, Priest and King*. This week we will look at Jesus as our Prophet, next week Jesus as our King, the following week Jesus as our Priest. For Christmas Eve we will take up the them of Christ as God and then finally on Christmas morning we will talk about Jesus as man. In order to help us with this theme we go to our catechism and under the question, “For what threefold office was Christ anointed?” we have the answer, “Christ was anointed to be our Prophet, Priest, and King.” This evening we want to look in particular at the first response, that of Christ as our Prophet and again the catechism tells us, “A. As Prophet, Christ: 1. preached personally during His life on earth, validating His word with miracles, especially His own resurrection; Deut. 18:15; Matt. 17:5; Mark 1:38; John 1:17-18; John 6:68; 2. through the preached Gospel today still proclaims Himself to be the Son of God and Redeemer of the world. Mark 16:15; Luke 10:16; 2 Cor. 5:20.”

The promise of a Messiah was first given in Genesis. Let me set the stage. In the beginning God created all things, out of nothing. Then, on the sixth day, after creating all the animals God set out to create the crown of His creation, human beings. Human beings were created different from the rest of all creation in that man was formed out of the dust of the ground and then God breathed into him the breath of life and man became a living being, with a body and a soul. Soon afterward God created the woman from the rib of the man in order to be a helper suitable for him. And up until this time everything was good and even very good. Again, please notice that after God had completed all His creation everything was good and even very good. When we move from God’s hand of creation, from God running the verbs, as we say, to the account of the humans doing the doing, then we move to the fall into sin and the ruin of creation. However, even though God’s creatures, humanity, brought sin, death and destruction into the world, God continued to show His love, care and concern. Immediately after man fell into sin, God intervened and promised to take care of what man broke, to send a Savior, a Messiah. We read this promise in 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.”

Later God reiterated His promise and expanded it when Moses announced to the people, “<sup>15</sup>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—<sup>16</sup>just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ <sup>17</sup>And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. <sup>18</sup>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’” (Deut. 18:15-19). God would send a Savior who would also be a prophet.

Although God waited some 2500 years from the time He first made His promise to fulfill His promise, yet He did fulfill His promise. In Bethlehem of Judea God fulfilled His promise. To a young woman, a virgin and to her betrothed husband, God sent His Son to be born. This Child was like all other children in that He was truly a human child, but He was different in that He was also the Son of God, that is He is truly God as well.

Up until He was about thirty years old and began His earthly ministry, we hear only about Jesus’ birth and about trip to Jerusalem and to the temple at the age of 12.

After reaching the age of thirty Jesus began His public ministry. It was in what was perceived to be His hometown of Nazareth that we hear of Him as not only the Messiah, but also as a prophet. “<sup>16</sup>And [Jesus] 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. <sup>17</sup>And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup>“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, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” <sup>22</sup>And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” <sup>23</sup>And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself.’ What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.” <sup>24</sup>And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. <sup>25</sup>But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, <sup>26</sup>and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. <sup>27</sup>And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” <sup>28</sup>When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. <sup>29</sup>And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. <sup>30</sup>But passing through their midst, he went away” (Luke 4:16-30). Of course, a prophet is not simply one who foretells of future events. A prophet is also one who proclaims the Word of God.

And finally, at about the age of thirty-three, after three short years of work, in Jerusalem Jesus does what He came to earth to do. There, just outside the city gates, Jesus is nailed to a cross in order to die and in so dying He paid the price for all sins of all people of all places of all times, including your sins and mine, once and for all.

Today Jesus continues to be our Savior and Prophet, yet He no longer comes to us immediately, rather, today He comes to us through means, mediately., through the read Word, in other words, as the Word of God is read to us every Sunday morning, and Wednesday evenings, Jesus speaks to us through this Word, as He speaks to us individually as we read His Word.

Jesus is our Savior and Prophet as He comes to us through His Word, that is as He comes to us through the preached Word. Here we understand that a Pastor cannot improve on the Word of God, and so his proclamation of the Word of God is the Word of God only and in so far as what He proclaims is the Word of God. Which reminds us as Pastors to preach the Word and then to sit down and be quiet.

Jesus is our Savior and Prophet as He comes to us through Holy Baptism. Through water and the Word of God, namely His name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Jesus comes into our hearts, gives us faith, gives us forgiveness, writes our names in the book of Life, and gives us eternal life.

Jesus is our Savior and Prophet as He comes to us through the Lord’s Supper. Through bread and wine and the Word of God, Jesus comes to us to give Himself for us to eat and drink. Very much like the Old Testament sacrifice, as the spotless lamb was present to be slaughtered, burnt on the altar and then eaten by the family, so Jesus presented Himself as our spotless lamb who went to the cross to be crucified and now comes to us as we eat His body and drink His blood through this most Holy Meal of the Lord’s Supper. And through this meal as through all His means of grace, our Lord gives to us faith, strengthening of faith, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

Jesus is our Savior and Prophet as He comes to us through confession and absolution. As we confess our sins and hear those most beautiful, most precious words, “I forgive you all your sins,”

then we know we have just what those words say we have, forgiveness of sins and with forgiveness comes life and salvation.

What does this mean? First, God the Father promised it. And we know that whatever God promises, He brings to completion.

Second, Jesus fulfills it. Jesus is one with the Father and so He fulfills the promises He makes that is He came not only to live for us, to do all that things we are supposed to do but are unable to do, but also to pay the price for our sins, to suffer the eternal spiritual death penalty for us in our place.

And third, the Holy Spirit gives me faith in Him. The work of the Holy Spirit is to motivate us, to stir in us and to work in and through us to live lives of faith, doing the good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do. And they are good works because they are done to His glory.

Thus we see, Jesus is our Messiah and our prophet, not only as He came during His life, but also as He continues to come to us and for us today. To Him be the glory for Jesus' sake. Amen.