

Prophet, Priest & King - Adult SS - Lesson 1: Prophet

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[0 : 00] So we're starting a new series this half term. Remember we're doing everything in half terms.! So we've got a new series this half term called Prophet, Priest and King.! And it's called that because this series is all about the work of Christ.

So this is all about the work that Christ did to redeem us. And we can best understand that work by understanding that Christ came as a prophet, priest and king.

So let me ask you, just have a think in your own mind right now. What did Christ need to do to redeem us? Okay, just have a think.

What work did Christ need to do in order to save us? I think our go-to answer would probably be his work was to die, right?

I think that's probably where our minds go. It's the cross. And let me say that that is absolutely true. He came to give his life as a ransom for many. His work was to be a sacrifice.

[1 : 05] That couldn't be more true. And we're going to see that over the next few weeks. That is the work of Christ. But actually, there is more to it than only the cross. So look how the shorter catechism speaks of Jesus redeeming us.

Question 23. Top of your handout. What offices does Christ execute as our redeemer, our saviour? Christ, as our redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his state of humiliation on earth and exaltation reigning in heaven.

When speaking of Christ's saving, redeeming work, to fully appreciate what he has done for us, we need to see that his work is not just generally doing a saving work.

He doesn't do a work called salvation. No, he redeems us. He saves us by doing the work of three offices. Christ came to do the work of a prophet, a priest, and a king in order to save us.

Now, an office just means an official position with duties. So like the office of presidents of the United States or police officers.

[2 : 29] They're officers because they take up an office. They have a role with specific duties that they need to execute, like enforcing the law, protecting the citizens.

And so they have that office with a task to fulfill. Well, in Christ's saving work, when he saved us, he was given a role with specific duties.

He was doing the work of three specific offices, a prophet, a priest, and a king. And that is because God has always saved through prophets, priests, and kings.

And I want us to do a very quick overview of the Old Testament to see this. But first off this lesson, it's going to just be going to be a bit of an introduction, an overview of prophet, priest, and king. So I just want us to do a bit of an overview of the Old Testament.

The first thing to see is this. God saves through prophets, priests, and kings. So if you just scan your Old Testament quickly in your mind, or you know it at all, you'll see that there are these three key figures that keep popping up in the Old Testament.

[3 : 42] Three figures that God raises up to save his people. So first of all, there are prophets. Shout some names out. Name some prophets.

Samuel. Samuel. Okay. Yeah, yeah. Anything else? Say again. Isaiah. Jeremiah. Jeremiah. Okay, yeah. We get into all the written prophets. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So Moses as well. Moses is a big prophet.

And we'll get on to definitions as we come to each office. But in short, prophets are people that God raises up and speaks through.

So God doesn't just generally blare his words from the sky to all humans. No, he reveals himself to certain people, prophets, and God speaks through those men.

He gives them a message and the prophet speaks it. And so these prophets are these key figures in the Old Testament. But there are also priests. Name some priests.

[4 : 38] Testing your Bible knowledge here. Any priests? Aaron. Say again? Aaron. Aaron. Aaron, the first priest. Yeah. Anyone else? Okay. Melchizedek. Yes.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's a bit of a twist. But yeah, yeah. Melchizedek. Yeah. We've got Zadok as well. Okay. So lots of priests in the Old Testament. And priests are given to represent people to God.

So the prophets represent God to the people. God speaks through them. But priests are given to represent the people up to God. And they're also there to sacrifice to God, to deal with sin.

And so Israel can't approach God however they like. They need to come to God through a priest. And so that is the second key figure of the Old Testament.

But finally, there are kings. Name some kings. Go on. Shut them up. David. There we go. Solomon. Saul's the first king, right? Yeah.

[5 : 39] And open up Kings and Chronicles. You'll see all the kings. And God gives kings to Israel to rule and protect his people. So God is king over everything, isn't he?

Right? He rules over everything. But he rules his people specifically and specially through an office. Through the office of a king.

And so when God comes to save his people, he doesn't just zap this thing called salvation down to them, whatever that would look like. No, he saves through the work of three types of people, three offices.

Prophets, priests, and kings. And so you can kind of think of it like this. Here's one of my diagrams again. So when God comes to save his people, this is all God's people down here.

But when he comes to save, when he does this work of salvation, he doesn't kind of just do a straight line zapping salvation to his people. No, he uses, he works through three offices.

[6 : 42] Prophets. Priests. And kings.

Thanks. When God saves. When God saves, he saves through these three specific offices. Three roles God uses to bring salvation.

And because these offices are kind of like middlemen between God and his people, we can call these men, these offices, mediators.

Right. Mediators. I'm going to be middlemen. These are people God uses to come to us or bring us to him or to rule over us.

God doesn't just zap salvation down. He uses mediators to save his people. And so these three offices are such important figures in the Old Testament, which is why all these people we meet, all these people you just shouted out, all these men are anointed.

[7 : 58] So David is anointed as king in 1 Samuel 16. Aaron is anointed as priest in Leviticus 8. Elisha the prophet is anointed by Elijah in 1 Kings.

And in Psalm 105, God calls his prophets his anointed ones. Now, anointed, it just means pouring oil over their heads.

So these men actually had oil poured over them and it would drizzle on top of their head and all over them. And this was a kind of a ceremonial act to set them apart from the rest of the people. It was to show that these men are different, that they've been given a special God-given office for a special task to be a mediator between God and man.

And the oil represents setting them apart for this office, but it also symbolizes the Holy Spirit equipping them in this task. They're not to do this in their own strength.

[9 : 02] This isn't just kind of a man-made office. This is a God-given office. And so God equips them for this special task with his spirit. And so each of these men were...

Let me draw a look at... All drop of oil on each. Right, that's been anointed. And so every figure, each of these offices you see in the Old Testament, these are all anointed ones.

That's how you can kind of refer to them. Because each have been anointed, they are referred to as the anointed ones. Or in Hebrew, the word for anointed one is Mashiach or Messiah.

These three offices, these three men are all mini-messiahs. And just remember that for later. And so God raises up three types of offices, roles, mediators, anoints them, and says, I will redeem my people through you, my anointed ones.

But zip ahead to the end of the Old Testament, and we quickly see these men he raises up. They're not good enough. The prophets don't perfectly reveal gods, and they're mostly not listened to.

[10:33] The priests need to keep sacrificing for the sins of the people. The issue of sin is never resolved. It's always lingering. And just read Kings and Chronicles, that the kings are a disaster, aren't they?

That they constantly lead people into idolatry. And so we leave the Old Testament knowing that these anointed ones are important.

This is how God saves. This is what we need. But none are good enough. And so God promises to send someone better. We leave the Old Testament waiting for a prophet like Moses, Deuteronomy 18, waiting for a king to reign perfectly forever, 2 Samuel 7.

But we're waiting for a priest forever, Psalm 110. And we're waiting for someone to be anointed, not just with oil, but a promised figure is given who will be anointed with the Holy Spirit, Isaiah 11.

And so we leave the Old Testament waiting for the anointed one, the Messiah, the ultimate prophet, priest, and king.

[11:48] And this is why I've drawn all these figures dotted. So this is the Old Testament you can see up there in the top left. This is why I've drawn all these figures dotted. Because in them we only kind of see a shadow, a dotted outline of the real saviour we need.

In these men, God was preparing the way, showing us this is what the saviour needs to be like. We do need a prophet, priest, and king.

And so, in the fullness of time, when Jesus finally came, he came to fulfil these offices.

To be the perfect mediator between God and man. All his work that is done to save sinners that he does, it's the work of a prophet, priest, and king.

So Christ didn't come onto the scene to just generally and vaguely save. He didn't kind of have to figure out what his work was and make it up as he went.

[12:50] No, there were three offices waiting for him to step into when he was born. Three anointed offices he had to fulfil. And this is why Jesus is called Christ.

So Christ means anointed one. In Hebrew it's Messiah, but in Greek it's Christ. The same meaning. And so, let's just all be clear about this.

Christ isn't Jesus' surname, okay? He's not Jesus' last name Christ. Christ is his official title. So it's the title that he holds.

So, like, King Charles, his first name isn't King, is it, right? That's his title. And so Christ isn't Jesus' surname, it's his title. The title of the office he holds.

He is Jesus, the anointed one. He's the prophet, priest, and king. So, think about, you know, when Peter confesses Jesus to be the Christ.

[13:50] Do you know what he's saying there? He's saying, Jesus, I know that you are the prophet, priest, and king. The one that we have been waiting for, the true mediator to really bring salvation to us.

And he isn't anointed with oil, is he? What happens in his baptism? I preached it a few weeks ago. The Holy Spirit rests on him. He's anointed with the Holy Spirit himself.

And this is why Paul says in 1 Timothy 2, For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ, Jesus.

And so when we come to the Old Testament, we see all these offices are fulfilled in Christ. Let me flip this around. I'm used to having it on the other side.

Come on. I want to break it. There we go. So, not a drastically different picture.

[14:59] But it's the fulfillment of all these three offices. So, yeah, we're in the New Testament now. So, all the three dotted offices.

Kept them there. That's going to be on the side of the wagon. All these three offices are going to finally fulfill in Christ, who is the one mediator.

So, Christ, meaning prophet, priest, and king. My pen is gone. And he isn't just anointed with oil. He's anointed with the Holy Spirit.

So, all these three offices are kind of wrapped up, fulfilled in Christ. But I want us to see something else.

I want us to see these three offices are not just random. You might ask, well, why these three of all types of offices? Why not two offices?

[15 : 56] Why not five offices? Well, I want us to see these three offices are related to our problem of sin. So, there's the second point to see today, the three problems of sin.

So, sin has done three things to us. Sin has, first of all, affected our minds. We're going to see this later on today. And we'll see all these different problems as we go throughout this series.

But, first of all, sin has affected our minds. We are ignorant. We don't know God. We don't know his will. And we need to know him.

And, second of all, sin has made us guilty. And we need to be made right with God. And sin has enslaved us.

Sin has ruled over us. It's become a master over us. And so, there are three problems of sin hanging over humanity.

[16 : 57] There is ignorance. There's guilt. And we're enslaved.

So, these are the three big problems of sin. And these three problems need to be dealt with if we are to be brought back to God.

And if you notice, these three problems are answered by the three offices of the mediator.

Right? An Italian theologian from the 17th century called Francis Turretin. I've got a quote there for you. I don't often give quotations. But I thought this was a very good one.

Francis Turretin says this. The threefold misery. Oh, yeah. It might be on the other side of your sheet. The threefold misery of men introduced by sin. Ignorance.

[17 : 58] Guilt. And tyranny and bondage by sin. I've said enslaved. But all the same thing. The threefold misery of men introduced by sin required this conjunction of a threefold office.

Ignorance is healed by the prophetic. Guilt by the priestly. The tyranny and corruption of sin by the kingly office. Prophetic light scatters the darkness of error.

The merit of the priest takes away guilt and procures a reconciliation for us. The power of the king removes the bondage of sin and death. The power of the king. The power of the king.

This is why God raised them up in the Old Testament. And this is why Christ came to fulfill these offices. We need a prophet, a priest, and a king.

And over the next few weeks, we're going to see how all this works. We're going to spend two weeks on each office. And we'll look at all of them and how Christ fulfills them, both on earth in his ministry and on the cross, but also continuing now in heaven.

[19 : 05] Christ still holds these offices. But first, let's look at how Christ is a prophet on earth and why that saves us.

Before we move on to this next one, let me pause there for questions. Perhaps let's try to sit to questions about what I've just said, because we're going to get on to more stuff. Yeah, yeah. Go on, Rico.

So, I always thought that having a king was a judgment on Israel when it says that God should be your king, but you'll be one sort of like the other nations.

How does that fit in with it? Yeah, yeah. So, that's from 1 Samuel 8. So, Israel asks for a king, and Samuel says, you're rejecting God by having this.

Don't ask for such a thing. And then God kind of eventually says, yes, no, fine, do give them a king.

So, that moment is a little bit complicated, but basically the issue there is not a king in itself, because God actually gives laws for kings in Deuteronomy 17.

[20 : 11] So, God knows that there's going to be a king, and he authorizes it in his law. So, it's not sinful to have a king, but it's why they're asking for it.

Basically, they see the other nations around them. They see the kings around them, and they say, yeah, I want a king just like that. God ruling us just as we are isn't good enough.

These other nations are going to take over. We need to be like them and great in them. And so, the issue isn't asking for a king, it's how and why they're asking for it. And so, if it was truly wrong to have a king, God wouldn't have said it in Deuteronomy 17, and he certainly wouldn't have let them have one, and for so long, and then promised one, a perfect king to come.

So, yeah, one time later, it's a little bit complicated, but the issue is why they're asking for it. It's not that they are asking for it. Yeah, Lachis.

I don't know if there's other things that sin has done, so for example, makes us unclean. Is that included in those categories? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, good question.

[21 : 18] So, yeah, I would say that's wrapped up in the Levitical, and we see that in the Mosaic Covenant. Like, how is uncleanness dealt with? Yeah, it's, you need to come to the tabernacle and

the temple, and it's the Levites that deal with that.

So, yeah, perhaps there's maybe, not an oversimplification, but yeah, but there's more to be said for each office. But yeah, the uncleanness aspect of it, yeah, that can be wrapped up in the priestly office.

Yeah, good question. Great, let's jump into Christ, the true prophet. First, let's define what a prophet is.

This is what God says they are. Look at Deuteronomy 18. I will raise up for them. This is kind of a promise for God speaking to Moses, and he's promising a prophet to come.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you, Moses, from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

[22 : 27] Simply put, a prophet has God's words in his mouth. God speaks through a prophet. A prophet is a voice box for God.

Or we can think of a prophet as a walkie-talkie from God. So, you know, you have two walkie-talkies, go to one room, speak into it, and the voice comes out the other end of the walkie-talkie in the other room.

Well, God is in heaven, and he's speaking in his walkie-talkie, and his voice comes out through the other walkie-talkie, and that is the prophet. He's the other walkie-talkie.

And that is why prophets often begin saying whatever they're about to say with, thus says the Lord. Have you seen that as you read the prophets? Moses even says that. Thus says the Lord.

They say that because they know everything that is about to come out of their mouth. They know these aren't really my words. They are the Lord coming out of my mouth.

[23 : 33] So, simply put, a prophet is a voice box for God. And so, when we speak of prophecy, that doesn't just mean the future. Okay?

So, that's often how Hollywood and, you know, kind of those sci-fi films would talk about prophecy, like the Mayan prophecy of 2012. Often, people think of prophecy, they think it only means the future, kind of predicting the future or foretelling future events.

But no, God's prophets are his voice box for all sorts of things. So, here's kind of a brief summary. They do talk about the future. Zephaniah talks about the coming day of the Lord.

But actually, in Deuteronomy 28, Moses, God speaks through Moses about kind of current warnings and blessings of the covenant. He just says, if you obeyed, then there will be blessings.

But if you disobeyed, there will be curses. It's kind of, it's an immediate speech to them. Isaiah, in Isaiah 40, just talks about who God is, the greatness of God.

[24 : 35] The nations are like a drop in the bucket. This is who God is, people. You need to know him. Prophets often speak of God's specific will for us. So, in Jeremiah 38, Jeremiah speaks to King Zedekiah to say, you need to surrender to the Babylonians, to the king of Babylon.

It's kind of a specific thing for the people to do. Prophets, Jonah 3, they speak of salvation. Repent, Nineveh. Come to the Lord. And often you see, particularly in the later prophets, like Hosea 14, the prophets call the people back to covenants.

So, a wandering sinful people. The prophets just call them back, return to the Lord, O Israel. So, God has given prophets to humanity to speak through them about all sorts of things.

They are the voice box for God. But I want us to see why. Why has God given us prophets? Why do we need God to speak through these mediators?

Well, break out into little groups and discuss that in just the first dotted box there. What has sin done to our knowledge of God? What does eternal life entail? And what happens when God speaks to us?

[25 : 57] Break out into groups. Try to be quick. Try to be quick.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[28 : 11] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. One more minute.

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, just the first box.

Okay, let's bring it together.

Louisa, you finished early. Go on. You get to do question one. But what has sin done to our knowledge of God? It's given us hard hearts, which make us ignorant of God. Right, hard hearts,

and that's affected our minds. We're ignorant of God.

We have darkened minds, and Romans 1, we've suppressed the truth of God, the knowledge of God. So we have an ignorance problem in sin. We don't know who God is.

[29 : 45] And what does eternal life entail, Rico? John 17. Knowing God. Life is found in knowing God, right?

In our ignorance, we're in death. But when we know God, that's eternal life. And so what happens when God speaks to us? Psalm 19. The law of the Lord is perfect.

Reviving the soul. So when God speaks, it's life. Because we know him in his words. And so why do we need a prophet?

Where would we be without any prophets? Well, then we would be all trapped in the silence of our sin, wouldn't we? This world would be in utter ignorance of who God is, and ignorant of the sin that we live in.

We would be utterly oblivious. And so we need to know God. Eternal life is only found in knowing God, with God.

[30 : 52] But how can we know him? That can only happen when he comes down to us in his grace, and he speaks to us. And God uses prophets to do that.

So imagine God never raised up any prophets. The fall happened, and there were never any prophets from then on. God never spoke through anyone.

If that happened, we would be utterly and completely lost and ignorant about God. And this is the problem that every philosopher out there faces.

This is the problem that every religious person, every person in this world who is looking for meaning and truth and purpose, which is everyone, all of us. This is the problem that they are ultimately looking for the voice of God, but they're going to all the wrong places to find it.

This world has become deaf, and they need a prophet to speak to them. Which is why we have Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah. God is speaking into a lost, deaf world.

[32 : 08] But there is something inadequate about these prophets. Israel kind of only gets glimpses and snippets of God's voice now and again, and even then, only to a few people.

And even then, they're not actually encountering God, are they? These prophets are still sinful messengers. And so we need a prophet to perfectly, and once and for all, reveal God to us.

And this is key for understanding why Christ came. Yes, Christ came to die, but that's not the whole picture. There's more to his work.

And I want you to break out again into groups. I want you to find out, what else did Christ come to do? Ask these questions. I'll give you a minute, 30, 30 seconds per question.

Thank you. Thank you.

[33 : 32] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 02] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So, thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

So, thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[38 : 32] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. But yet, when he teaches and he speaks, he does so with authority, doesn't he? Even the Pharisees recognize this.

Who is this man speaking with authority like that? But how can a prophet speak like that without saying, thus says the Lord? That is because he is the Lord.

Every word Jesus speaks is the word of God with the truth and authority and perfection of God. And so if you want to know God, what he's like and speak to him and him speak to you, you now come to Jesus.

[40 : 05] So God isn't hidden. Philosophers and people looking for meaning and purpose don't need to go searching anymore. God has once and for all spoken in his son.

But Christ does also teach and preach, doesn't he? He speaks words. And we can't overlook that. He isn't just a prophet in what he is.

But he's a prophet in what he says. And I want to finish with this very briefly, just to look at Christ and his teaching. Christ the teacher. So we see Jesus teaching and preaching a lot in the Gospels. Famously, there's the Sermon on the Mount, isn't there? Preaching is a big component of his ministry. In fact, Jesus says one of the purposes he came to earth was to preach.

So look at Luke 4. He said to them, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well. For I was sent for this purpose.

[41 : 08] And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea. Jesus came to preach. He came to die, but he came to preach as well.

And what does Jesus preach about? The kingdom of God. And that was the opening line of his first sermon, wasn't it? Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. So like Jonah going to Nineveh and the other prophets, Jesus preaches about God and salvation and the future and God's will for us. He preaches there is a kingdom coming. And so you need to repent. But there's a difference, isn't there? Jesus brings a new element to this message.

He isn't just like Jonah. He's the greater Jonah. And so he doesn't just say repent. Now, what do we hear Jesus preach? He says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.

Take up your cross and follow me. Believe in me and you will never die. So just as Jesus is the perfect revelation of God, he's the perfect revelation of salvation.

[42 : 22] God has spoken in his son, the mediator, to say to a deaf world, come and find salvation in me. So without Jesus, we would be left in the utter silence of our sin.

But Christ is our prophet to redeem us from that silence. And let me end with this thought. Even on the cross, Jesus was being a prophet.

Because what does the cross tell us about God? The cross proclaims our God is a merciful and gracious God, doesn't it?

The cross tells us he's not just this omnipotent force out there. He's not just this detached deity. No, the crucified Jesus proclaims to us that our God is the saviour of sinners.

And so Christ, in all of who he is and what he taught and even how he died, he was a prophet. And he continues to be a prophet, not only when he was on earth, but also now in heaven.

[43 : 33] All these offices continue, even to this day, as Jesus reigns in heaven. And we'll see that next week. But we'll see that Jesus is still speaking in the world today. Okay, how am I doing for time?

I still went over, didn't I? Let's just open up for questions. Oh, yeah.

Hi, I'm over. In some characters, they mean that's importance, is the openness that's what he used. Sorry, is that? In some characters, he does do also.

What is something that he can do? Yeah. Yeah. What are you looking for? Yeah, so, yeah. The question was, so do some churches, some churches do believe that the office of prophet continues?

I might address that next week, because that's going to continue. But maybe one thing to address that is, the office of prophet can't continue as it is among the people of God anymore, because Christ is the fulfilment of all the prophets.

[44 : 45] So I would say, I'm taking you to Hebrews 1, to say that, yeah, the office of prophet among the people has ended in that sense, because it's fulfilled by the Son, who God has spoken through once and for all.

Now, there is a prophetic task to an office in the church, I would say. The minister has a prophetic task, but he's not a prophet.

He speaks the word of God to the people of God. But, well, we'll see that next week. I'll try and tease you. You've got to come back, I'll be here, all right? Yeah, yeah. Yeah, Rico.

So, what about the word Messiah? How does Messiah sum up those three prophets? So, Messiah means Christ. So, Messiah is the Hebrew word of Christ.

So, if the New Testament was all written in Hebrew, so the Old Testament's written in Hebrew, and they call the anointed one Messiah. And then the New Testament's written in Greek, and so you can't have a Hebrew word in Greek.

[45 : 48] So, that word becomes Christ. So, same thing. If the New Testament was written in Hebrew, if the Greek language didn't exist and it was only Hebrew, we would just only know the

word Messiah.

So, it would be Jesus the Messiah. Does that make sense? Yeah. Right, let me pray to close. Lord God, we praise you for your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King, who is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of your nature.

We praise you that you have spoken in your Son, you have not left this world in the silence of our sin, but you have spoken and you have given life in your Son. And we pray that we would hear him today as he speaks to us in his word, through the preaching of your word.

Speak to us, give us life, and would we know that the glory of our Prophet, Priest, and King, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his name. Amen. Amen. Let me just advertise a book.

[46 : 59] So, there's a book on the bookstall by John T. Rhodes. He's the IPC minister up in Leeds. He's written a book pretty much on all of this, on who Christ is, his two natures, and then his three offices, Prophets, Priest, and King.

It's on the bookstall, Man of Sorrow is King Glory. Excellent book. I'll keep advertising this, but if you want a head start.