

A Prophet Like No Other

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- [0 : 00] Let us worship God. We shall sing to God's praise from Psalm 63. Psalm 63.
- And from the beginning. Lord thee, my God, I laudely seek, my soul doth thirst for thee.
My flesh longs in a dry parched land, wherein no waters be.
- That I thy power may behold, and brightness of thy face, as I have seen thee heretofore
within thy holy place. Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give.
- I in thy name will lift my hands, and bless thee while I live. Even as with marrow and with
fat, my soul shall filled be.
- Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee. When I do thee upon my bed,
remember with delight. And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night.
- [1 : 14] In shadow of thy wings shall joy, for thou mine help hast been. My soul thee follows hard,
and me thy right hand doth sustain.
- We shall sing these verses. Six stanzas from the beginning of Psalm 63. Lord thee, my
God, I laudely seek, my soul doth thirst for thee.
- Lord thee, my God, I laudely seek, my soul doth thirst for thee.
- My flesh songs in God, I laudely seek, my flesh song, my soul doth thirst for thee.
- God, I thy light, my power, behold, and my best, O life is.
- [2 : 25] As thy heart in heaven, for me, in thy holy grace.
- Since better is thy love, my life, my spirit shall give.
- I hazeem, my life, may thou wine, my soul doth thirst for thee.
- In a twelfth, my old one with God, my soul shall bear with me.
- Then shall my love with joy for them sing praises sung to thee.
- [3 : 42] When I do thee upon my memory and the world divine, and where all thee I meditate in
watches of the night.
- In the shadows, my winds are joined for the light of God's peace.
- My holy foes are on me, thy light of justice.
- Amen. Let us come before God in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord, help us to magnify your
name.
- O Lord, help us to recognise that we are in your presence. As our people who worship,
and as we seek to worship, may our eyes be lifted to the heavens.
- [5 : 13] May we, may we as your people, acknowledge our need to worship. We see those who
are in the world with us.
- They give their praise and their adulation to the God of heaven and earth.
- Our people are a chosen people. And as such, they know to come to the only living and
through God.

And to Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. We bless you and thank you that you have made him known to them.

And to us as we worship. And that we know him, him to know his life eternal. We know him of whom your servant the apostle spoke.

[6 : 34] As one who confessed that he knew Christ to be his Lord and his Saviour.

And that Lord and Saviour maintained that that was known to him, not by reason of anything to do with the flesh or to blood.

But that the God of heaven has revealed that to him. And so it is for all your people. Not in the sense of being chosen as a race as the Jews were.

They were a much favoured people. But it is said of them that he came to his own. And his own received him not.

When he was in the world. The world that was made by him. The world knew him not.

[7 : 47] And it is thus to this day. Only those who know him. Know him because. He has made himself known to them.

And if we are indeed numbered amongst them. We know that he is. Life eternal. To such as. Come to him by faith.

Enable us then to worship. As those who know to worship. And who seek to do so in spirit and in truth. We pray your blessing upon all who gather in your name.

At this appointed time. Whether they are met collectively. Or individually. Whether they are met publicly. Or in private.

We know that your word encourages us to meet publicly. And to meet collectively. And that blessing is granted to those who so too.

[8 : 49] In your providence you. You make known to us that. When these things are denied to us. By reason of circumstance.

You are still willing. To bless. And those who. Are guilty of. Denying themselves. What you have ordained for their good.

Will suffer loss. Because of it. We pray that you would encourage us. To. To. Look to yourself. To bless us.

In the appointed ways. Through the reading of your word. Through the hearing of your word preached. Through prayer. And.

Meditation. In the meditation. In the meditation. Public and private. Through the gathering together of the saints. And the interaction that. Behoves them.

[9 : 45] To carry out. For it is good for us. To meet together. Your servant. The saints. Acknowledge that. I enjoyed.

Went to the house of God. Go up. They said to me. We give thanks that. The word. Requires us to understand.

That there is a special. Blessing. Given to those who. Who come to. To you. In the prescribed way.

And those who choose to. Follow other ways. That you have not. Ordained. And who have chosen to do so. Willfully and deliberately. Even though they be your people.

They will suffer loss. We give thanks that. They in the Lord. That firmly trust.

[10 : 42] Shall be. Like Sion Hill. Which at no time. Can be removed. But standeth ever still. And. The security of your people.

The steadfastness. Of your people. The. Perseverance. Of your people. Is something that. That you are responsible for.

But you. Direct us. To avail ourselves. Of. The means. By which. Such security. Is. Brought to our attention.

Remember your people. Then. With all their needs. We pray. We pray. We pray for your blessing. Upon those who are housebound. Confined to their homes. Be reason of illness. Or weakness.

At this time of pandemic. There are many. Who have suffered. Because of that. We pray that you would bless them. As we enter into a phase of recovery.

[11 : 41] Even though there is uncertainty. Connected. With that. Process. We remember all the nations of the earth. Who have. Suffered. Tragic.

Loss. Because of it. And. Like our own nation. Which could have suffered. Far greater loss. But it's not for your goodness. Which we acknowledge. And we pray for mercy.

For those who. Refuse to. Acknowledge you. We pray that you would bless. Those who are. Confined to hospital.

Care homes for the elderly. We pray that you would. Minister to them where they are. Remembering those who are. Interested with their care. And asking that you would bless them.

In delivering such care to them. We give thanks for the medical profession. For our health service. For nurses and doctors.

[12 : 40] And carers of all descriptions. We bless you. And thank you for them. And ask that you would. Sanctify every dealing. That we have with one another. In such.

Situations. Remember all who. Form part of the ancillary services. Pray for all the. Various bodies.

That are responsible for. Our care and well-being. Remember the police force. We remember the fire service. Remember the armed forces.

In the various ways. In which. Responsibility devolves upon them. Pray for our government. Both in the UK parliament.

And the Scottish parliament. We ask that you would overrule for good. In all that is done. Even though your name is despised. Remember.

[13 : 38] At the present. Those who are grieving and sorrowful. And ask that you would. In mercy. Bind up their wounds. Pray especially for our Queen.

As she. Continues. In the face of grief. That undoubtedly will be there. We remember Lord. All such.

Pray for. Your own goodness and grace. To be made known to the needy. Throughout the world. We bless you and thank you. That you are. A God who is God over all.

That even though this world. Knows little of your. Your ways. We. Know that. You. You are sovereign.

As your servant of old said. In every providence. There is. God. Even behind a frowning providence. He.

[14 : 36] Hides a smiling face. Because you are a God who overrules. In all of life's. Events. And. All the turmoil. As well as all the goodness.

And the joy. That we appreciate. Even though we don't acknowledge it. As we ought. We remember Lord. Those who are. Sent out to preach the gospel.

And we give thanks for those who. Have preached the gospel to ourselves. Minister to our souls. Drawn our attention to scripture. That has been meaningful.

In taking us thus far. May those who are ignorant of it. Be stunned to. To. Silence.

Even. When your word. Is directed to their attention. That they may learn what it is. To be still and know that you are God. The one who is the refuge.

[15 : 35] And the strength of your people. So watch over us. We pray. Blessing. All that is wrought in your name. This day. To the far corners of the earth. We pray Lord.

Your blessing. And ask mercy. And forgiveness. For every sin. In Jesus name. We ask all things. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

We are going to hear the word of God. As we have it in the New Testament scriptures. And we are reading from the Gospel of John. Chapter 3. And we are going to take up the reading.

At verse 22. John chapter 3. At verse 22. After these things came Jesus.

And his disciples. Into the land of Judea. And there. He tarried with them. And baptized. And John also was baptizing.

[16 : 30] In Anon near to Salem. Because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.

Then there arose a question. Between some of John's disciples. And the Jews. About purifying. And they came unto John. And said unto him.

Rabbi. He that was with thee. Beyond Jordan. To whom thou bearest witness. Behold. The same baptizes.

And all men come unto him. And John answered and said. A man can receive nothing. Except it be given him from heaven. He yourselves bear me witness.

That I said I am not the Christ. But that I am sent before him. He that hath a bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom.

[17 : 28] Which standeth and heareth him. Rejoices greatly. Because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled.

He must increase. He must increase. But I must decrease. He that cometh from above. Is above all. He that is of the earth.

Is earthly. And speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven. Is above all. And what he hath seen. And heard. That he testifieth.

And no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony. Hath set to his heel. That God is true.

For he whom God hath sent. Speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the spirit. By measure unto him. The father loveth the son.

[18 : 26] And hath given all things. Unto his hand. He that believeth on the son. Hath everlasting life. And he that believeth not.

The son shall not. Believeth not the son. Shall not see life. But the wrath of God. Abideth on him.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing. To this reading. Of his word. And to his name. Be the praise. I'd like us to turn.

For a short while. To this passage. That we have read. John chapter 3. And we can read again. At verse 34.

For he whom God hath sent. Speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the spirit. By measure. Unto him.

[19 : 25] If you'll remember. Last Lord's Day. We spoke a bit about. The Lord Jesus Christ. Being the source. Of eternal life.

He is the only one. Who can say. I am the way. The truth. And the life. And there is a logical. Conclusion. That we can come to.

Here. Here in this passage. Before us. Because he is spoken of again. As one that. Speaks the words.

Of God. For the apostle says. God giveth not the spirit. By measure. Unto him. I believe.

That at the very least. This means. That Christ. Has received. From the father. The outpouring. Of the Holy Spirit. And this.

[20 : 22] John teaches. In chapter 1. Where he is seen. As the fullness. Of the spirit. Dwelling. Upon him.

Without measure. Psalm 45. Which is often described. As a psalm. That is. Messianic. At least in part. Speaks about.

The passion. And office. Of the Messiah. There we read. Thou fairer art. Than sons of men. Into thy lips. The store. Of grace infused.

God. Therefore thee. Hath blessed. Forevermore. Now. I would like to put. The words. Of the passage. Before us. Into. The context.

Of the overall. Teaching. About the passion. Of the Lord Jesus. As this is fulfilled. Concerning him. And why. Those of us.

[21 : 19] Who have been taught. The shorter catechism. Will remember. That in order. To redeem. The elect of God. The son of God. Had to become a man. He had to experience.

The incarnation. He had to be born. Of a woman. Namely. Mary. The catechism. Then describes. Three offices.

That he was expected. To fulfill. As the redeemer. Of God's elect. The office. Of prophet. Of priest. And king.

The word office. Is descriptive. Of the official role. That God the father. Gave to God the son. In his capacity. As redeemer.

Tasks. That he was asked. To fulfill. Alexander. Whiteness. Commentary. On the shorter catechism. Is.

[22 : 20] Scrupulously. Concerned. To emphasize. The nature. Of the tasks. The name. Is never applied. To what any man.

Does for himself. And at his own. Instance. The name of office. Is applied only. To what one does. For another.

While White. Must acknowledge. As indeed. Must we all. That a specific. Scripture. Scriptural designation. Of office. Is not applied.

To Christ. Specifically. To the roles. Identified. By the catechism. And other theological. Works. The words.

Of prophet. Priest. And king. But it cannot. Be limited. To these roles. Alone. And scholars. Basing that. Their understanding.

[23 : 15] On scripture. Identify him. As fulfilling. These roles. So. With a particular. Focus. On Christ. As prophet.

Where. Must we begin. What is it. That a prophet. Does. Where is Christ. Seen. As being.

A prophet. And finally. Why should this. Be of interest. To the person. Who is a Christian. Believer. Or. Who would.

Wish to be a believer. A prophet. What is it. That a prophet. Does. I think. That the idea. Most people. Possess. About a prophet.

Is that. Such a person. Predicts. The future. A prophet. And that. Indeed. Is the secondary. Meaning. We find. For prophet. In the concise.

[24 : 09] Oxford. Dictionary. However. The primary. Meaning. We find. There is. An inspired. Teacher. Proclaimer. Or proclaimer. Of the will.

Of God. There is a difference. In the way. That. One. Emphasis. Falls. On foretelling.

While the other. The emphasis. On foretelling. Both of them. It has to be said. Focus. On what is.

The will of God. The Old Testament. Prophets. We find. From what they. Do. On God's.

Behalf. They make known. What God. Has to say. What they are to do. What they are not to do. Sometimes.

[25 : 04] The prophet. Had to warn. About the consequences. Of disobedience. By revealing to them. Temporal judgements. As well as.

The threat of. Eternal condemnation. Some of the prophets. Are associated. With certain predictions. That have a future perspective. In fact.

All the biblical prophets. Can be said. To fulfill that role. However. For the most part. They are speaking. To a present generation. About the need.

To resolve issues. That are. Contemporary. And not future. They also direct. People to God. Either to return.

To him. Or. To. Hear him. Sometimes. They go astray. And sometimes. They are exposed.

[25 : 58] To danger. The enemies. Of. Either. Physical enemies. Or. Spiritual enemies.

Are encroaching. And they need protection. And he alone. Is the one. To whom they must turn. To whom. But.

One thing. That they are reminded. Of. Repeatedly. Is that. The greatest. Danger. To which they are exposed. Is God's displeasure.

Over sin. For which. There is. But one remedy. Which he alone. Can supply. The words. Of the prophet. Isaiah. Are perhaps.

The best example. That we can provide. It's not just. One example. That are ample. But this one. Springs to mind. In chapter 45.

[26 : 55] Tell ye. And bring them near. Yea. Let them take counsel. Together. Who has declared. This. From an ancient time. Who has told it.

From that time. Have not. Have not. I. The Lord. And there is no God. Else. Beside me. A just God. And a saviour.

There is none. Beside me. Look unto me. And be. You saved all. The ends. Of the earth. For I am God. And there is none. Else. But the fact.

Of the matter. Was. God. Appointed. And equipped. Men. To be prophets. Even though. Every generation. Brought forth. A battery. Of false prophets.

But the promise. Given through. Moses. Was. That there would be many different men. Different in all sorts of ways. Who would occupy this role.

[27 : 53] Until the great. The one great prophet. Comes. As we read in. Deuteronomy. Chapter 15.

Deuteronomy. Chapter 18. And verse 15. We read there. The Lord. Thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet. From the midst of thee.

Of thy brethren. Like unto me. And to him. Shall you harken. According to all. That thou decidest. Of the Lord. Thy God.

In Horeb. In the day of the assembly. Saying. Let me not. Hear again. The voice of the Lord. My God. Neither let me see. This great fire.

Anymore. That I die not. And the Lord said unto me. They have well spoken. That which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet. From among the brethren.

[28 : 49] Like unto thee. And I will put my words in his mouth. And he shall speak unto them. All that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass.

That whosoever. Will not hearken. Unto my words. Which he shall speak in my name. I will require it of him. But the prophet.

Which shall presume to speak a word in my name. Which I have not commanded him to speak. Or that shall speak in the name of other gods.

Even that prophet shall die. This did not take place. We believe. Until its fulfillment.

In the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. So where is Christ to be seen a prophet? We have to remember that God's word spoke of the coming prophet.

[29 : 50] He was anticipated yet like many prophecies that spoke of Messiah. Very few actually identify the Lord Jesus as its fulfillment.

For example the prophet Isaiah writes in chapter 11. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse. And a branch shall grow out of his roots.

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The spirit of wisdom and understanding. The spirit of counsel and might. The spirit of knowledge.

And the fear of the Lord. John the Baptist was recognized by some as a prophet. But he pointed to the Lord as the prophet.

Who was mightier than himself. Despite him being declared the prophet of the highest. Destined to declare the name of the Lord. Going before his face to prepare his ways.

[30 : 49] Jesus himself had a self-awareness. Concerning the office of prophet. Reading the Gospel of Luke. Of Jesus quoting the words of Isaiah 61.

Verse 1 and following. And he states clearly. This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears. Yet he knew they doubted. As he states no prophet is accepted in his own country.

But Jesus knows that he is more than just another prophet. Bringing God's word. Something that he does indeed do. But as the Apostle says he is the word.

John opens the Gospel with these magnificent words. In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God. And the word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God. Now as we saw before the passage. This passage before us states plainly. That God has given the spirit without measure to the Son.

[31 : 59] And as the one sent by God. It is God's words. He speaks. And he speaks the word with power. So much so that it is recognized by some at least.

That no one ever spoke like him. John repeatedly records the truth concerning Jesus. As the Father has taught me. I speak these things.

And he that sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone. For I do always these things that please him. Not only does he do this.

He does it like no other can. Because he knows the Father like no one else does. Notice he is described here.

As he that cometh from heaven. Able to testify about what he has seen and heard. That is why in Fisher's Catechism he is called the great ambassador of heaven.

[33 : 01] Sent to declare the will of God unto men. The writer to the Hebrews calls him the apostle and high priest of our profession.

Here the designation apostle means the same as prophet. Sent by God to reveal the Father's will to the elect. I think that takes us nicely to the third part of our consideration of this passage.

Why does the role of prophet occupied by Christ remain of interest to his people or any who would wish to be one with him? Christ Jesus alone has the authority to declare the truth of God concerning himself.

Yes, prophets and apostles fulfill this role. But theirs is a delegated authority. He has preeminence amongst them all. Many will fill this delegated role.

But Christ alone is the one who is able to open blind eyes and to bring light to sin darkened lives. We are reminded in the scripture of the truth concerning the people of God.

[34 : 17] That they are taught of the Lord. The knowledge that they lack can only come from one source and that is Christ. And he imparts that knowledge by his word and spirit.

This is not known according to the...

Well, if I put it like this, when we think of what is known of Christ, the knowledge that needs to be known of Christ must come from himself.

According to the apostle Peter, when he speaks about the prophets of the Old Testament and where they gained their knowledge, he clearly attributes that to the Spirit of Christ.

In 1 Peter chapter 1 we read of the believer being kept by the power of God through faith and to salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

[35 : 34] Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be you are in heaviness through manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes, Lord, be tried with fire, might be found with praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

And this is the point. Whom having not seen, you love, in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul, of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, and to whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into.

The interest of God's people in the things of God is kindled by God himself in the person of the Son as he ministers to the people through the Spirit.

And that knowledge that he possesses is nurtured and encouraged by the same Spirit. Of course there is a mystery there, but it does not.

But it shows that what the New Testament saints enjoy is a continuation of what the Old Testament saints had, albeit in fuller measure as was shown by the appearing of the Spirit at Pentecost.

[37 : 47] But it reminds us that salvation is wrought by the Holy Spirit working in the believer through the medium of the Word of God, the Bible, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, who was sent to enlighten and illuminate our minds in the knowledge of Christ, so that we appreciate our need of him and how he, by his life and death, meets that need.

Theologians, I will take you, I hope, and tell you that Christ, as our prophet, reveals to us the will of God for our salvation, which means God's Word, the Scripture, which contains what Paul the Apostle calls the whole counsel of God and Christ, by his Spirit, enables us to discover what we need to know and do in order to be saved, what it means to believe.

I have spoken to many people who, before their conversion, found it impossible to believe. And then, when the Spirit of Christ came to them, it was impossible for them not to believe.

At least, that is the way it seemed to them. They could not understand why they did not believe in Christ before or sooner. But he needs to open our hearts, because our hearts are shut, closed, tied against him.

And that needs to change, and he is the one that needs to change it. He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

[39 : 40] He came as one that was full of the Spirit of God in order to accomplish the work that God had entrusted to him.

It is remarkable in many ways in which God chooses through his word to reveal himself to people.

Sometimes it is quite different to what we would expect. Many of you will have heard mention of the theologian John Owen.

He wasn't always a theologian, nor was he always a practising Christian. And it is said of him that prior to his coming to faith, he was undergoing a time of trial.

trial. He was in despair virtually because of the way things were with his soul. And a relative of his understood that he needed to gain light on the way of salvation.

[41 : 00] And he decided that the best way to do it would be to take him to church and to take him to hear a reputable preacher of the gospel. And they went together to a place in the city where a renowned preacher was going to take the service that day.

But unfortunately for whatever reason that preacher was unable to attend. And his relative thought well I'd better take him to someone else because they had no knowledge of who was going to take the service that attended.

The congregation had no knowledge. But Owen said I'm going to remain here and if someone comes good and if not I'm going back to my lodgings. And whoever it was that came he preached a service and the text that he chose was the words Why are you fearful O ye of little faith?

And the moment that he read these words Owen was gripped by them. And instantly he prayed to God that he would give him some light for his circumstance.

He wanted God to help him out of his situation and he prayed there and then that God would do that. And as if by miracle this preacher answered every question that was arising up in the heart of John Owen at that moment.

[42 : 45] This was God's doing. This was the way that God meant him to come to know the truth concerning Christ.

The preaching and the preacher were unremarkable but the word in the hand of the spirit was truly blessed to him and his soul.

We are thankful to God that that is the way it is regardless of reputation or skill. It is God's word in the hand of the spirit that God chooses to bless and if it were not so then we would be the ones who are in the grip of despair.

Christ is the word made flesh. Christ is the one who came to make the word a living word and he gave his spirit to this word that they might hear the word made alive to them.

That's the way it is to this day. And we give thanks to God that he is able to quicken those who are dead in trespasses and sin, those who are ignorant, those who are unaware of their predicament as sinners going to a lost eternity.

[44 : 14] God is able still through his spirit to bless his word that speaks to them preeminently about the word made flesh, about Christ, the one who is said here that is loved by the Father and who has given all things into his hand.

May you today understand something of God speaking to you in Christ and that you may know something of his love for fallen sinners that take him into this world.

Let us pray. Most merciful God, hear our petitions on behalf of those who do not have a care or a concern for their soul. Bless ourselves, every one of us here, each one.

We pray that you would bless us, bless us body and soul that we would lift our eyes to the heavens and magnify the name of Christ who is the Son of the Most High God, who is the word, who is the word made flesh and who is to his people in particular the way, the truth and to life.

Guide us in that truth to him that we rest and receive him. Hear us, rest upon him and receive him. Hear our petitions, go before us, each one.

[45 : 42] Now may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all now and always. Amen.