

# Prophet, Priest & King

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please turn to the Gospel of Matthew again. I want for the moment to read in chapter 26 and in the middle of verse 63, Matthew 26, verse 63. And the high priest said to him, I adjure you by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus said to him, you have said so. Amen. We meet today in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I want us to focus our attention on him as Christ. Christ means the anointed one. He is the Messiah. And the word Messiah means the same thing. So Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the great anointed one of God.

And I want us as we look at one or two sections of Matthew's account of the crucifixion to see how Jesus is the Christ who is the anointed prophet and the Christ who is the anointed priest and the Christ who is the anointed king.

[ 1 : 43 ] And the way that these themes come up in Matthew, and we'll think of it more broadly than just what Matthew is saying, but the way they come up in this Gospel and in the other Gospels is that Jesus is mocked in each of these ways.

He is mocked as the prophet, and he is mocked as the priest, and he is mocked as the king. There's something terrible about anyone inflicting suffering on anyone else willingly.

And there's something even worse in somebody enjoying doing that and in other people taking pleasure in making fun of someone who is suffering terribly.

And of course there is something even worse than that in that kind of mockery being directed at Jesus on the cross, the Son of God.

This narrative here is full of mockery as different people laugh and poke fun at Jesus Christ, the one who is, as I say here, the prophet and the priest and the king.

[ 3 : 15 ] May none of us here in this building ever be guilty of making light of holy things and making fun of anything in this book.

And today, may our attention be focused on Jesus as, if I can put it this way, we seek to get Jesus right, to understand the Jesus of the Bible.

And we'll try to do that in contrast to so many around the cross who were getting Jesus wrong, who didn't understand who he was and why he had come and who just made sport of him in his humiliation on the tree.

So let's look at the prophet and the priest and the king in turn and the way that Jesus is mocked here, but especially the way that Jesus fulfills each of these three aspects of his office as the Christ. first of all, the prophet. If you look now at chapter 26 and verse 67 and 68, it's explicit there.

[ 4 : 39 ] Then they spat in his face and struck him, and some slapped him, saying, prophesy to us, you Christ.

Who is it that struck you? Now, here they are, as I said, explicitly mocking his claims to be a prophet.

They, as we know from the other gospels, they cover his eyes, and then they take turns to hit him. And they're saying, well, if you're the Christ, if you're the anointed one, if you're a prophet filled with the spirit of God, tell us who hit you last.

Tell us who's going to hit you next. And in that way, they make fun of his claim to be the prophet. Of course, the irony of what's going on right through the story of the cross here is that Jesus is more of a prophet in these events, I believe, than ever in the rest of his life.

He was always a prophet through his ministry. But there's something very important about the way that he's a prophet on these pages as he moves to the cross and as he hangs on the cross.

[ 6 : 19 ] Now, to go back over some of the earlier part of the story, Jesus is anointed in a special way for his ministry in his baptism.

The Holy Spirit comes down from heaven and rests on him there. And I believe that one of the things that's happening at his baptism is that he is being anointed in a special way to exercise a ministry as a prophet.

And he's fulfilling pictures there in the Old Testament of the great prophet who would come. Or fulfilling prophecies in Isaiah, for example.

Behold my servant whom I uphold. I will put my spirit on him. Or later in Isaiah, the spirit has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

A servant prophet promised in the Old Testament. And at his baptism, Jesus is anointed as the servant prophet who will bring the good news of God to men and women.

[ 7 : 38 ] And so throughout his ministry, he speaks as a prophet. And you all know the kinds of things that Jesus said. But I want you to remember something else about his prophetic ministry.

It wasn't just a speaking ministry. Though it was essentially that. But remember that the prophets also did things.

So for example, Elijah and Elisha worked miracles by the Spirit of God. So they were prophets who spoke and who also did amazing things.

And then also in the later prophets, many of them did things. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea.

Again, you know the stories. And you know that in each of these ministries, the prophets didn't just speak, but they engaged in symbolic actions.

They did things like visual aids, dramatizing their message in all kinds of ways. So prophets were prophets in word and in deed.

[ 8 : 51 ] And when Jesus comes as a prophet, he speaks and he does things as a prophet. Now I want you in the light of that to think about the cross as we focus on Jesus and his prophetic ministry at the cross.

Jesus speaks from the cross as a prophet. You know the great seven words, the seven sayings of Calvary where Jesus begins by saying, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

And at the end, the seventh saying, Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit. In each of these seven sayings, Jesus on the cross is a prophet speaking the words of God.

But I also think that he is a prophet on the cross. In terms of what is happening there, even when he's silent, it's still part of his prophetic ministry.

The cross speaks. The cross, for one thing, speaks to us of what we are as sinners, that our sin deserved the horror and the pain and the shame of Calvary.

[ 10 : 21 ] Our sin was that bad. Our bondage was that great that only the Son of God experiencing, as it were, hell on earth, the forsakenness of his father, Calvary, only these terrible events could deal with our terrible sin.

But Calvary also says to you that you are precious and significant. If God was willing to go to that extent, and to pay that price for the Son of God to shed his blood, to redeem his people, how precious men and women and boys and girls are to God.

The cross is saying you are a sinner, but it's also saying you are significant. People are precious. The cross is also, in all kinds of ways, saying things about God. The cross has a message about God.

It speaks, for example, and Paul picks this up in the letter to the Romans in two different places.

The cross speaks of the justice of God and it speaks of the love of God.

[ 11 : 48 ] So Paul says that. In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul also speaks about the cross as speaking about the wisdom of God and the power of God.

The cross looks like foolishness and weakness, but actually the cross is wisdom and power. Or in Philippians 2, the cross speaks of the humility of God.

God willing in the person of his son to come from heaven and to come so low, to become a slave and to die even the death of the cross.

What does that say about the loving humility of almighty God? So on the cross, Jesus is a prophet who says amazing things, but the whole event of the cross is itself prophetic.

It's a sermon. It's got a message saying things about human beings and saying things about God.

[ 12 : 55 ] I was going to say the cross is a pulpit in a sense, but maybe from another point of view, it's a stage and a drama is being enacted on that stage.

and the key figure in the drama is Jesus Christ. And as we watch that spectacle, God is speaking to us about ourselves and about himself and about how the only way to come to know him is to trust in

the one who is hanging on that tree and whose words and whose deeds even there are giving this great message of good news about a gospel in him.

And of course, the sequel to the story is that Jesus rises from the dead as the vindicated prophet. Everything he said about himself was true and everything that he said about the cross and what would follow it was true.

He prophesied the future and he rises from the dead as the prophet whose words were true and whose deeds have been accepted and who is now forever the exalted prophet who still today speaks to us from heaven.

He speaks to us through his own word and we're to ask that we might have eyes to see what the prophet was doing on the stage of Calvary and also that we might have ears to hear today as that exalted prophet speaks to us from his own word and invites us to come to know him and invites us to enjoy him forever.

[ 14 : 57 ] These people got Jesus as prophet completely wrong but we can get the whole thing right by God's grace as we understand what Jesus was doing as the prophet of Calvary.

But I want secondly to turn to think of Jesus as the priest of Calvary. If you turn now to chapter 27 and from verse 40 now the mockery of him as priest isn't as explicit as the mockery of him as prophet but I think it's there in the story.

From verse 40 as people make fun of Jesus on the cross and say you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days save yourself if you are the son of God come down from the cross so also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him saying he saved others he cannot save himself.

Jesus the priest who is being mocked here you notice by the chief priests who say that he can't even save himself and he's also you notice being mocked in the context of what he had said about the temple the priests thought of the temple as their space and Jesus had said things about them and about the temple that they felt threatened them as if he was superior to them and superior to the temple and so here are the priests and others as they see it getting their own back at the one who said things about them and the temple that they didn't like and they're saying now who were you to take us on now you're on the cross and here are we the priests laughing at you and there's the temple that you said you were superior to and the temple that you said would come down and be rebuilt is still standing and will stand for centuries they would have been saying in their own minds now again they're getting

Jesus completely wrong and again I want to reverse in the story and go back to the baptism Jesus is baptized with the Holy Spirit for his ministry also as the priest he's the anointed servant priest who comes to do what all the other priests could never do he comes to offer himself as a sacrifice which will deal with sin once and for all and forever just to move from Matthew's account for a second it's interesting the way that Luke and Mark tell the story of the baptism that they connected with priesthood or with the cross in different ways for example in the gospel of Luke we're told that Jesus was about 30 when he was baptized and it may be that part of the significance of that in the mind of the gospel writer is that that was the age at which the

[ 18 : 55 ] Levitical priests took up their ministries so the anointed priest is anointed at the age when priests were anointed and in Mark's account Mark uses a particular word only twice in his gospel a word that refers to the rending or the tearing of something and he uses it at the baptism and at the death of Christ as if he's connecting the two events he uses it at the baptism to say heaven was torn open and the spirit came down and he uses it in this part of the story to say that the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom at the beginning of the story there's a rending of the heavens as the priest is anointed towards the conclusion of the story there's the rending of the veil because the priest has offered himself and done the work that means that the temple ritual is over that everything has been fulfilled that the final sacrifice has been offered that the veil can be torn from top to bottom because blood has been found that is precious enough to fulfill the sacrificial system forever and forever through his ministry

Jesus had as I said earlier taken on the priests the priests could declare somebody clean or they sometimes declared somebody forgiven but Jesus was saying much more than that Jesus was claiming that he could actually forgive sins not just like a priest declare that someone was accepted because of what had been offered but he could actually directly forgive someone's sins more than a priest would ever dare to do and they could declare someone clean but he actually cleansed people he did it by his own power and authority I think in these things he was saying I'm a priest and I more

than any of you priests I am the real priest and I can deal with sin and I can save people I can make them clean he also spoke of his own sacrifice and we'll be thinking today of words that he used when he spoke about his sacrificial blood and the blood of the covenant shed for many and again right through his ministry he said so much about the temple you know he cleansed the temple and he said he fulfilled the temple and he said a greater than the temple is here and he also pronounced judgment on the temple you see in all of these things too I think he was saying I am the priest it's not your space the temple it's my space it's my father's house it's my place and I will fulfill its rituals and I will fulfill its meaningfulness and I will end its ministry because I will give myself as the final sacrifice and when he dies as the lamb of God that is that sign in the tearing of the curtain that the sacrifice has been offered the high priest could only go behind that veil once a year on the day of atonement and then he had to repeat it the following year and his successors had to repeat it but

Jesus does the unrepeatable and as the book of Hebrews says he offered himself once and that emphasis repeated in Hebrews the repeated emphasis of the once is so important that Jesus dealt with sin as our priest in one self offering where he the innocent one having had sin imputed to him he gave himself on the cross as our substitute and that sacrifice tore the veil and that sacrifice was accepted and you see again in the resurrection how that's the father saying yes to the work of the son to the sacrifice of Calvary and to the work of the priest and it's so significant that when Jesus risen from the dead comes on the

Lord's day to be amongst his disciples he just appears in the room where the doors are locked he says to them peace what did the high priest say every day of atonement when people wondered if he was still alive behind the veil they heard the bells on the roll and they knew he was still there moving around he would come out of that place having done what was given him to do for that year and he would say peace shalom to the people when Jesus our great high priest having died and risen again comes to be with his disciples on that Lord's day he says to them shalom peace and then the priest shows them the insignia of the new covenant cut into his hands and his side evidence that it's the same

[ 25 : 27 ] Jesus and evidence that the sacrifice has been accepted this is the priest the great high priest the supreme Aaronic priest the priest like Melchizedek he fulfills all the pictures in himself so if our faith is in Jesus today then our faith is in one who fully successfully triumphantly offered himself as a sacrifice to take away sin and was raised from the dead as the priest who could say forever to his people shalom to you on the basis of what I have done in my flesh cut for you that you might be forgiven through my precious blood again these people got Jesus wrong but at the moment when they thought his claims to priesthood were being rubbished that's how they saw him that his claims were nonsense at the very moments when they thought that and when they were saying that he was more priest than ever and he was doing the work that was going to save all who would trust in him they were saying come down from the cross and we might believe that you are someone but of course it was only by staying on the cross that he could be the priest giving himself as a sacrifice for sinners our great high priest and because of him you have access confidence to enter the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus the great priest but he's also the anointed king if you look back in Matthew 27 king is mentioned several times in the story but it's perhaps especially vivid from verse 28 Matthew 27 at 28 and following and they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him and twisting together a crown of thorns they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand and kneeling before him they mocked him saying hail king of the Jews and so on their mockery continues again they're saying you can't be a king you don't look like a king you don't act like a king but they make fun of what they think are his pretensions to kingship and they dress him up in the nearest they can get to a kingly robe a kingly color and they give him a staff in his hand and they put a crown on his head and they're just mocking him as king again let me go back through the story and remind you that at his baptism

Jesus is also anointed to fulfill a royal kingly ministry right through the rest of his time on earth he's anointed with the spirit so that he might live and act and minister and die and rise again as the king throughout his ministry he continually refers to the kingdom and he contrasts that kingdom of his with the kingdom that many around him thought the messiah would bring in they were looking for anointed king in David's line who would defeat their enemies physical political enemies and Jesus says I'm not that kind of king and it's not that kind of kingdom he also talks about another kingdom throughout his ministry the kingdom of the prince of this world and he wages war against that

kingdom and he wages war against sin and through the things he says and the things he does he wins one victory after another over the powers of sin the powers of hell over disease and storm and death and all the rest of it

Jesus the king is the warrior who comes to do battle with his enemies and our enemies and I believe that is also happening as I guess maybe everybody in this building believes that is happening at the cross that Jesus is a king on Calvary now again I'm saying these people got it wrong he didn't look like a king and anyway they say he's dying so where's the king and where's the kingdom the few people he had close to him seem to have run away so here's a king without a kingdom and in a few hours we will have him dead and his kingdom finished but they did not realize that Jesus was acting as a king on that cross that the cross is actually a weapon of warfare and that Jesus through the cross is going to win the greatest victory that anybody has ever won Jesus is on the cross as a warrior king doing battle with sin and the devil and by paying the price for sin he defeats the devil as Jesus pays the price the devil loses what he has over the people of Jesus if Jesus has paid the price then the devil has no right to these people so by paying the price Jesus is defeating the devil as a warrior king and of course he's the great victor at Calvary and in Matthew's account here you can see that as soon as Jesus dies there are signs of victory the curtain is torn the earth shakes the rocks are split the tombs are opened bodies of saints who had fallen asleep rise from the dead and the centurion and others are filled with awe and say truly this was the son of God as soon as the king dies there are signs that the king has triumphed if you want to follow that up in the key verses in the new testament that demonstrate this Colossians 2 14 and 15 and Hebrews 2 14 and 15 each in their different ways make the point that through the cross a victory was won and that was a royal victory a kingly victory as Jesus at Calvary defeats his and our enemies then of course he is raised from the dead again the father's yes to the work of the son and he moves into a new era of his kingship of his royal authority with all authority given to him as Matthew will say at the end of the book all authority in heaven and in earth that he might be the king who will reign from heaven who will one day return and who will be king in the new heavens and the new earth over his people forever so these are the pictures that

[ 34 : 08 ] I want you to have in your mind today as we have focused and will focus on the cross to think of Calvary as a stage with a drama being enacted and as it were there's a pulpit on that stage and the great prophet is preaching his great message Calvary also as a place of liturgy a place where a great sacrifice is being offered God's great liturgy is being enacted there and the priest is giving himself as a sacrifice for sin in that liturgy with the cross as the altar of the priest and then to think of Calvary in terms of the final image as a battlefield as a place of conflict cosmic conflict and victory and in that picture the cross is the weapon as it were the sword that is being wielded by God so that sin and the devil might be defeated and we might be forgiven and freed by

King Jesus so today if you are a believer this is your savior and if you are not a believer today this is the savior who is offered to you you need the prophet and you need the priest and you need the king the great anointed Lord Jesus Christ and he again today offers himself to you and offers his forgiveness and his blessing to you and if you trust in Jesus you will always have a prophet you will always have a priest you will always have a king in him you will be safe forever amen we're going to sing now from the second psalm in the

Scottish Psalter this is on page 200 psalm 2 page 200 and the tune is sheffield why rage the heathen and vain things why do the people mind verse 4 he that in heaven sits shall laugh the Lord shall scorn them all we're going to sing to verse 6 psalm 2 1 to 6 that's four stanzas to God's praise I wish the hidden unwind things why do the people mind kings of the earth who set themselves and Swiss to frit who Our name wa Amen.

O collaborativemission holy air I have with me come away I want now as is traditional just to take a couple of minutes to address the question of who should come to the Lord's table

[ 39 : 34 ] I want to add to that a second question how should we come to the Lord's table I warn you this will be very brief and very simple and my answer to these two questions is exactly the same first of all who should come to the Lord's table those whose only argument is Jesus those whose only plea is the Lord Jesus Christ and what he did for a sinner like them nothing about myself my background or my beliefs or my church attendance or my infant baptism or my whatever the 101 things that people will sometimes say that justify themselves none of that however good any of it might be none of that is ever sufficient but Jesus is sufficient so who should come to the Lord's table those whose only argument is Jesus who are pleading him and resting on him and see

no hope in anyone or anything else but Jesus alone and the second question how should we come to the Lord's table as those whose only argument is Jesus it doesn't matter how often we've come we must never come saying well I'm now coming to the table as someone who's had lots of experiences or who now has so much more knowledge or who has witnessed to Christ and seen people come to know him or whatever else we might add there are many things that in a long Christian life people will look back on and want to celebrate because God is good and God speaks to us and God blesses us and God works through us but none of these things justify our coming to the table doesn't matter how often anyone comes to the Lord's table we still come every time as those whose only argument is Jesus and whose only plea is what he did in my place so we're all united at the table on the same level and here for the same reason we're here only because of Jesus as the hymn writer said nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I claim amen let's now sing from psalm 118 as the elements are placed on the table this is the traditional version on page 398 and from verse 15 the tune is coles hill page 398 psalm 118 at verse 15 in dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health the Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly and we'll sing as many verses as the presenter thinks necessary until everything is ready at the table sesong and dwellings of thelic

BA poner tune to you and doth ever peas in cs ng inàcies have ■ sólo hour hur step■■ Irish The Lord's right hand, the feather of the King.

The bright and old, the mighty Lord, exalted is all mine.

The bright and old, the mighty Lord, exalted is all mine.

[ 44 : 38 ] I shall not die, the given child, the words of God this child.

The Lord, help me just my sense of a God to let me know by.

Lord, set thee open unto me, the gifts of my justness.

Then will I enter into them, and I the Lord will bless.