

ACTS | The Final Prophet | Story 3

Rob Rogers October 3, 2021

Introduction

Before we jump into Acts 3 today, I want to do a quick review... OF ACTS 1-2

1. Acts is the Second volume of Luke's writing this letter. The Gospel of Luke is the First. *Luke's* gospel describes everything Jesus did and taught. *Acts* is telling of everything that God did through the Apostles, the early Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit.
2. The early followers are told to wait for the Holy Spirit.
3. Christ ascends to the right hand of the Father and takes His rightful place on His throne.
4. Matthias is chosen to replace Judas as one of the 12 Apostles.
5. Pentecost happens.

Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- they start speaking in tongues — people from all different regions and nations hear the disciples speaking in their own language, and the people think they are drunk.
 - a. Peter says, "It's only 9am, no one gets drunk at 9am!" Peter starts preaching and 3,000 people are added to the Church.

Last Sunday, we talked about the birth of the church, and the spiritual, sacred practices of the early church. That they were devoted to...

1. The Apostle's Teaching
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of Bread
4. Prayer

They gathered in homes and in the Temple, day by day. Even in a hostile culture, the early church wasn't marked with hostility, but with tremendous love and compassion — self-sacrifice even for their enemies. The result was that the Lord added to their number day by day, those who were being saved.

VIDEO SERIES Last Sunday Afternoon: We discussed the healing of the Lame Beggar. Peter and John, as they were going to the Temple, passed by the Beautiful Gate, when the Lame Beggar asked for physical resources. The Holy Spirit through Peter and John offered something much greater — a miraculous healing. The Beggar began leaping and laughing his way into the Temple; everyone was amazed because they had been walking by this man every day and had seen him begging for money. When Peter saw the amazement of the people, he seized the opportunity and began to preach.

That's where we're picking up today... ***Peter Preaching in Solomon's Portico***

Peter Preaching in Solomon's Portico

Acts 3:11-26

While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. ¹² And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago. ²² Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' ²⁴ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' ²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Peter's preaching in Acts 3 is similar to His preaching in Acts 2 — but we're going to discover what Peter is emphasizing.

Over and over the word **prophet** is used. Throughout the entirety of scripture, we're continually pointed to three specific, offices or functions that Jesus fulfills and holds.

PROPHET | PRIEST | KING

Prophet | Priest | King

Peter quotes from Deuteronomy 18:15 in Acts 3:22.

Acts 3:22

Moses said, "The Lord God will raise up for you a **prophet** like me from your brothers.

Stephen, a few chapters later, preaches a message that identifies Jesus as the prophet Moses was talking about.

Hebrews 4:14

¹⁴ Since then we have a great **High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a **High Priest** who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Jesus is also called a "Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."

John describes Christ's inevitable return.

Revelation 19:13-16

...He is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King — the perfect fulfillment of all three

A **priest** is a representative, and advocate, a shepherd.

A **prophet** is a revealer, a prophet declares the truth of God, who God is, what He desires, His will.

A **prophet** represents God to mankind, while a **priest** represents us to God.

A **priest** would offer sacrifice for sin on behalf of the people.

**As a prophet, Jesus represents God to us,
and as a priest, He represents us to God.**

But Jesus is also a King. He's the rightful ruler of heaven and earth, over all creation, He has the right to command us, and deserves our total submission and allegiance.

Now, the danger within Christendom is that as we see Jesus fulfilling these three offices, we get tunnel vision and begin to emphasize one or two functions and undervalue one of the three. Whatever you believe to be true about God is going to inform what you believe to be true about yourself — and will spill over into how you treat the people around you.

For example:

- If you only view Christ as **priest**... as some who represents us to God, without the truth-telling revealing nature of the **prophet**.... You can fall into licentiousness... the idea that because Christ has forgiven you — you can sin all you want, and you don't need to come under His Kingship, or be challenged with the prophetic Truth of God.
- If you view Christ primarily as **prophet** — and undervalue His role as **priest**, you'll be in danger of becoming cold, uncaring, even arrogant in your use of TRUTH to prove a point, rather than serve the listener. This is where you have people beating other people over the heads with the Bible — there's no grace, no shepherding or compassion — if you only see value in or only emphasize Christ's role as **prophet**.
- If you view Christ only as **King**, you'll be in danger of having a relationship of submission with Christ without any intimacy, friendship, or joy.

If you try to hold on to one, if you either have one or two, and reject the others, or if you even just have a grasp on one, and a kind of vague understanding of the others, it will introduce distortions into your life.

But what we see in Peter's sermon in Acts 3 is the clear revealing of Christ specifically in the office of Prophet.

Christ as Prophet

Acts 3:18

...what God foretold by the mouth of **all the prophets**,

This one sentence gives us a solid understanding of ***the what a prophet does***.

The way we come to understand the character, the nature, the will of God is through taking the entirety of Scripture into consideration, the whole counsel of God drawing some conclusions based on what we find. Now, in some areas, it's plain as day, it's black and white, and other areas it requires some level of interpretation... to read what was written, then interpret and apply it to today.

Here Peter is telling the people — this is not open to interpretation. This isn't up for debate, or dependent on your perspective. Because all of what the Old Testament prophets spoke, it wasn't the prophet's interpretation of things — it was God Himself speaking!

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Malachi...

These prophets were not interpreting God's will, intentions, character... it was God Himself speaking through them. They were a mouthpiece for God.

2 Peter 1:21

No prophecy of Scripture is by the prophet's own interpretation, but prophets spoke from God, not of their own will, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

A prophet is someone who brings the very words of God to the world. Who reveals the will and nature of God. A prophet is not an interpreter — a prophet is a revealer, a declarer, a proclaimer of something absolute and non-negotiable. When a prophet was speaking, they were bringing something that superseded opinions, traditions, contrary information, your feelings about things — it didn't matter. What the scripture tells us about the prophets is that when they spoke, they were the very words of God.

Now, we don't like this in modern western culture. Because *your truth is your truth*, and *my truth is mine*, and you've got to live your truth... whatever that is.

So — let's just make it plain:

If “your truth” differs with “God's truth” — it's not truth.

That's what it means when the Bible says there are prophets, that God has sent prophets to deliver the truth.

Matthew 23:34

...I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town

- In other words, “Though you and your fathers before you have murdered the prophets *when I sent them to you, I will keep sending them to you* because they bring the truth. And even though you plug

your ears, and gnash your teeth because of the hardness of your hearts... *I will keep sending you prophets because I love you enough to tell you the truth.*"

APPLICATION: *I think what's often difficult is when someone presents us with truth — maybe a hard truth to accept. It's easy to plug our ears, to harden our hearts, and to reject not only what they're saying, but reject them altogether — because it's hard to hear the truth sometimes.*

PERSONAL: When I was in my early 20's, a very short-lived dating relationship had just ended, and I received a seven-page scathing letter — it tore me to pieces. I read through that letter, and I kept it. And read through it again a few days later, and again a few days later. Over a period of several weeks, as I read through this letter — I simply asked the question, "Is any of it true?"

The way it was delivered was so painful — there was a lot in there that wasn't true — but I knew God was giving me an opportunity to grow — if I would humble myself and ask the Holy Spirit to show me where I needed to change, to grow, to learn.

APPLICATION: When someone presents you with something difficult to accept — a hard truth, the challenge for us, as followers of Christ, is to posture ourselves in a way that can rightly divide what is and what isn't true. In humility, bring it before the Lord and ask, "Is any of it true? What do I need to learn? What do you want to teach me through this? Where do I need to grow and change? God what do you want me to see?"

*One of the lessons for us in observing the Pharisees rejection of truth over and over is — it's not that they **couldn't** hear it, it's that they **wouldn't** even consider the possibility of truth in what the prophets were bringing to them.*

But I want you to notice something...

In Matthew 23:34 Jesus says, "*I keep sending you prophets, wise men, teachers.*"

- Do you realize what He *doesn't* say? He *doesn't* say "*I am a prophet, a wise man, a teacher.*" Jesus, standing right in front of the religious leaders says, "*I am the One* who has been sending all of the prophets to you for hundreds of years to you to get your attention. *I'm not one of the prophets*, and *I'm the One who called the prophets*, and told the prophets what to say, to get you to wake up!

All the other prophets in the Bible are saying things like, "Thus says the Lord." In other words, this is not my idea, *I'm just the messenger.*

When Jesus shows up — He says, "Truly truly, *I say to you...*" In other words, "*I am the author and originator of all things in heaven and on earth. Don't you dare equate me with a mere messenger; I am the full and perfect expression of the power and nature of God to humanity. It all originated with me, you exist because I spoke you into existence and yet here I stand offering my life, in order that you might know my glory and be changed...*"

Hebrews 1:1-3

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the **prophets**,² but in these last days He has spoken to us by **His Son** whom He appointed the Heir of all things, through Whom also He created the world.³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

- other religions will acknowledge that Christ was a prophet — that He was a good moral teacher — that He was the leader of a great movement
 - but they won't ever acknowledge that Christ is the FINAL WORD of GOD
 - the full expression of the glory of God
 - the perfect revelation of God's character
 - the exact imprint of God's nature
 - that Jesus Christ is the Ultimate and Final Prophet!

Acts 3:13-14

The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified **His servant Jesus**, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you denied **the Holy and Righteous One**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and you killed **the Author of life**, whom God raised from the dead.

And this is exactly why Peter says, when you all killed Jesus...

Acts 3:17

"... I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled.

While we were God's enemies, Christ died for us.

While we had our fists in the air toward heaven, demanding our own way, clinging to our own "rights," Christ died for us.

And in His death — we see pain and beauty united.

We see destruction and healing in unison with one another.

We see the Great Love of God for us in His willingness to suffer for us what He never deserved.

Just like Jesus took the place of the murderer, and Barabbas walked free at the demand of a mob — *We walk free because of the silence and surrender of the Author of Life.*

Now what?

Acts 3:19

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the differences between the functions of a priest and a prophet? How did Jesus fulfill both of those functions?
2. Jesus is also "king." Do any of these three functions rank higher than any of the others?
3. In Matthew 23:34, what does Jesus say about His relationship to the prophets?
4. Read aloud Acts 3:13-14, 17. Respond to, "We walk free because of the silence and surrender of the Author of Life."
5. How do times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord, according to Acts 3:19?

NOTES