

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Not a Messiah THE Messiah

Scripture: John 20:31

Code: 81-1

For now we return to the gospel of John, and I think it's safe to say that we go back to chapter 20, verses 30 and 31, where we were last Sunday, and this really marks the sort of official end of the gospel. John began his gospel with a prologue on the identity of Christ, and he concludes his gospel with the prologue in chapter 21. But the official conclusion of the thrust of this entire gospel is really verses 30 and 31, and he gives us a summary purpose statement: "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have in His name."

And we told you last week he has an evidential purpose, he's giving you miracles so that you may believe; and he has an evangelistic purpose, so that in believing you may have life in His name. But I want you to notice that salvation comes to those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We know what it means to say that He is the Son of God, that He is equal to God, He is God the Son, the second member of the Trinity. But what is it that we need to understand about Him being the Christ? I may remind some folks that Christ is not Jesus' last name. Christ is a title, it is a title. And what that title means is significant, because you are to believe that Jesus is the Christ. That's how John wraps up the formal part of his gospel, and it's essential how he began the first part.

In chapter 1 and verse 41, we read that "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which translated means Christ)." So now we know that Christ is a Greek translation for the Hebrew word "Messiah." Please notice we have found "the" Messiah. Not just any messiah, the Messiah. And in chapter 20, verse 31, Jesus is the Christ, not just any Christ.

Now what does this mean, if eternal life comes to those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, is the Christ, what does that mean? If we were to survey most Christian people I'm afraid, most professing Christian people and ask them exactly, "What does it mean that Jesus is the Messiah?" and, "Do you believe that?" they might have a quizzical look on their face and wonder just exactly what we're talking about. Although they are very familiar with the term "Christ," which is the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament word "Messiah," it's used 500 times in the New Testament – very familiar word – there would be very few people who I think could give us a full definition of what it is to say that He is the Christ or the Messiah. And yet it is critical for us to believe that in order to have eternal life.

You may already believe it when I introduce it to you know, you will affirm that you believe it, but may not have been fully capable of explaining it. What does the term mean? How does it relate to the Lord Jesus?

There are many titles which our Lord bears in Scripture, but this one is the dominating title in the New Testament: 500 times He is referred to as the Messiah, the Christ. In fact, the Bible, although it's one book, is two books. It is an Old Testament and a New Testament; and the Old Testament

predicts the coming of the Messiah, and the New Testaments records the fulfillment of that prediction. In the Old Testament the Messiah is anticipated, in the New Testament arrives.

But just exactly what are we talking about when we say, “Jesus is Messiah”? Well, let's start with the term, the Hebrew term “Messiah.” It is rooted in a verb that means to spread a liquid over – simple – to spread a liquid over. It is used in ancient literature very frequently, because that was a very frequent function.

In fact, in Jeremiah 22:14 it is translated in English “painting” and it refers to the painting of a house: spreading liquid paint over a house. That is the verb form. It came then to mean to anoint, to spread oil on someone or something, to smear olive oil, generally speaking, on an object or a person. And anytime in Jewish religious history olive oil was sort of ceremonial spread on an object or a person. It was to symbolize that they were set apart for some sacred responsibility. It was used, introduced really by God in the building of the tabernacle back in the book of Exodus where the altar was to be anointed with oil, Exodus 29, where the entire tabernacle was to be anointed with oil in Exodus, chapter 40, and it meant literally to set apart for spiritual usage, to consecrate, to identify as sacred, to take it out of the secular realm and set it apart for God. So that happened to certain objects in the Old Testament.

But more importantly, it happened to certain people. There are people in the Old Testament who are part of the theocratic kingdom – the theocratic kingdom means the kingdom God rules, the people of Israel. There are people in that kingdom who are set apart for specific spiritual duty. They are representatives of God. They have a responsibility to God to act in His place, if you will, and they were to be identified by this oil-smearing, this anointing. They are therefore messiahs, anointed ones – messiahs, with a small M and a plural S. There were many of them.

Just to give you the three people in the theocratic kingdom that were messiahs, one would be the kings, two would be the priests, and three would be the prophets. We find the kings being anointed with oil as a symbol of them being set aside to God. That would be true of Saul, that would be true of David, that would be true of Solomon, and that continued to be true.

We see the priests anointed with oil symbolizing that they're set apart to God. That started in Exodus 28 with the great high priest, the first high priest Aaron, and it passed on through the priesthood. And then we see in 1 Kings when we meet the prophet Elijah that prophets were anointed with oil. This ritual was symbolic of their consecration to unique service to God.

Now messiah then means anointed one. In the Old Testament it's used thirty-nine times, the term. Twenty-eight of those thirty-nine it refers to kings. So kings were the most frequently anointed people. But many other were anointed, as I mentioned, that aren't necessarily described in Scripture. That would be the priests and the prophets.

The verb when it appears is passive, it's passive. This kind of official setting apart, this kind of symbolic anointing was done by someone to this individual who had been set apart for high duty. We would say then that a messiah is someone who has been anointed in an official way as a sacred declaration of consecration to God for a special duty: a king to rule, a priest to intercede and mediate, and a prophet to preach, proclaim truth.

And, as I said, there were many such messiahs among the kings and priests and prophets of the Old Testament. Make a note: none of them is ever called “Savior” and none of them is ever called “Lord,” and none of them is ever called the Messiah. But when you come to the New Testament and you meet the Lord Jesus Christ, the language is, “We have found the Messiah, that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.” He is presented in the New Testament as the consummate comprehensive, Anointed One who sums up all that a king could be, all that a priest could be, and all that a prophet could be; and at the same time, He is the one and only Lord and Savior of the World.

So as we look at Jesus we’re going to see how this messianic identity shows up in its perfection in Him. That’s going to take us a couple of weeks. I want to begin this morning by talking about the office of the Messiah, and then next time about the person of the Messiah, and then finally we’ll get to the work of the Messiah. But let’s talk about the office of Messiah, or the position itself. As I told you, messiah meant that you were set apart by God for very high duty in the theocratic kingdom representing Him. There were many such anointed persons. But let’s look at what marked those persons and see how it finds its perfection in Christ.

Anyone who was a messiah was divinely selected, that’s the first point. The first point in the office of Messiah is divine selection. No king, no priest, and no prophet could legitimately be self-appointed. This is not a volunteer operation, this was by divine calling. In fact, when anyone intruded in any of those offices without a divine calling they were subject to severe punishment, including death. And when someone in one of those offices crossed the line into another one they also faced the same severe consequence of death.

If you were a king in the theocratic kingdom of Israel, it was because God appointed you a king. If you were a priest, it was because God had appointed you a priest. If you were a prophet, it was because God had appointed you a prophet. They were all divinely selected. And I want to take you through the Old Testament. Be patient with me; I want you to see this on the pages of Scripture, so we’re going to be looking at a number of Old Testament passages for a little bit this morning.

Let’s look at Deuteronomy, chapter 17, and hear from the Lord Himself. God is telling them on the edge of the Promised Land in the book of Deuteronomy as they get ready to enter into that land. Chapter 17 of Deuteronomy, verse 14: “When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’ - God knows they’re going to say that; he says then – “you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses. You shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.” This is the prerogative of God alone. He is to be a Jew and he is to be the one chosen by God; this isn’t for you to decide.

We find in 1 Samuel, chapter 9, verse 15, “The day before Saul’s coming, the Lord revealed this to Samuel saying, ‘About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin,’ – namely Saul, Israel’s first king – ‘and you shall anoint him’ – there he is, a messiah, because he is being anointed. ‘Anoint him to be prince over My people,’ – or king – ‘and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me.’ When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, ‘Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people.’” This is the pattern that is followed.

God ordained who would be Israel's first king, and followed that with another ordination in 1 Samuel, chapter 16. Look at that text. Who follows Saul is none other than David. As you know, Samuel goes to Bethlehem to find a son of Jesse, because the Lord is going to appoint a son of Jesse, verse 7: "The Lord said to Samuel," – 1 Samuel 16:7 – "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

God had said that in reference to verse 6 and he looked at Eliab and thought, Samuel did, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. This must be the guy, something to look at – height of his stature, his appearance." They had done that with Saul; it didn't work out really well. But still he had been God's choice.

"They called Abinadab," – in verse 8 – "had him pass before Samuel, and he said, 'The Lord has not chosen this one either.' Next came Shammah, and he said, 'The Lord has not chosen this one either.' Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are these all the children?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he's tending the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.'

"So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, 'Arise, anoint him; for this is he.' Samuel took the horn of oil, anointed him" – at that moment he becomes a messiah, an anointed one – "in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward." So the first thing to say about these kings is that they were chosen by God.

Now back to Deuteronomy for a moment, and back to the 18th chapter, the same thing was true of the priests. They too were chosen by God. This is not an elected office or a volunteer office, this is by divine *thiot*. Verse 5 of chapter 18 in Deuteronomy: "The Lord your God has chosen him and his sons" – that's Levi and the Levites – "from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the Lord forever." The Levitical priesthood was established by God.

We also find backing up one book into the book of Numbers, similar indication in the 3rd chapter and verse 3: "These are the names of the sons of Aaron," – the Aaronic priesthood – "the anointed priests, the anointed priests, who he ordained to serve as priests." Again, this is by divine ordination.

We see the same with the prophets a good illustration of that. And you could look at a lot of the prophets who record in their prophecies their call from God. But Jeremiah 1 is a wonderful testimony to divine calling in the part of a prophet. "The word of the Lord" – verse 2 of Jeremiah 1 – "came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

"Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.'" Again, this is how prophets were identified, they were identified by God Himself. So whether you're a king or a priest or a prophet, if you were an anointed one, a messiah, it was by divine selection.

Secondly, you were given also divine authority. You became an agent of God; you became a servant of the theocratic king who is God Himself. So you had honor and consecration with authority, with authority. You remember, perhaps, Nathan's words to David in 2 Samuel 12:7 where he says to David, "You are the man! You are the man!" meaning, "You bear the authority. You must act, you are the responsible one."

In 2 Samuel 23 we read, "These are the last words of David." And what are the last words of David? First of all, he introduces David, "The man who was raised on high declares, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel." And then David says, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, who rules in the fear of God,'" and so forth. He bears divine authority granted to him by God in the theocratic kingdom to rule in the place of God.

Now the same was true of priests. Priests were mediators between men and God. They mediated in sacrifices, but they also mediated as judges. Go back to Deuteronomy 17 again for just a moment, verse 8, where it says, "In any case too difficult for you to decide, between one kind of homicide or another, between one kind of lawsuit or another, between one kind of assault or another, being cases of dispute in your courts, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the Lord your God chooses. So it shall come to the Levitical priest or the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall inquire of them and they will declare to you the verdict in the case. You shall do according to the terms of the verdict." In other words, in the theocratic kingdom, these Levitical priests acting as judges had divine authority delegated to them; they act on behalf of God, according to the terms of the law which they teach you. They were law teachers – the priests were – and they were the ones who adjudicated in difficult cases before the people.

Verse 12 says, "The man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve the Lord your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die," – capital punishment for failure to accept the authority of a priest. Aaron is actually called in Psalm 106 the holy one of the Lord.

Now the same would be true of prophets. If you go back to Jeremiah 1 again they spoke for God with divine authority. In chapter 1, "Jeremiah says, 'Alas, Lord God, I don't know how to speak, I'm a youth.' The Lord said, 'Don't say, 'I'm a youth,' because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak.' And then He says, 'Don't be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you,' declares the Lord.

"Then the Lord stretched out His hand, touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.'" That is the authority of a prophet, endowed with divine authority. The other prophets had that same endowment of delegated authority to speak for God.

Even the prophet Haggai speaks of Him, and it says, "Thus, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozakak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet as the Lord their God had sent him." They obeyed the Lord when they obeyed the words of the prophet of the Lord. Divinely selected and given delegated divine authority; that's what it meant to be a prophet.

There's a third aspect, they were empowered for service divinely. They were empowered for service. And I won't break out all the texts on this, because it's obvious to you. Kings, prophets, and priests

were endowed with power from on high. What that means is the Spirit of the Lord came upon them.

In the case of Saul, 1 Samuel 10, verse 6, the Spirit of the Lord was on him. David, 1 Samuel 16:13, the Spirit of the Lord was on him. A really wonderful declaration of that comes in the case of Ezekiel where “the Lord comes to Ezekiel and says” – in chapter 2, verse 1 – ‘Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!’ As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet. The Spirit entered me.

John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb. Micah, chapter 3, verse 8, Micah speaks of being empowered by the Spirit. We see many of the prophets in the Old Testament of whom it says the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he spoke.

The same is true with the priests. They were empowered in their function, because their function was primarily as teachers of God’s law. Priests were primarily teachers of God’s law, interpreters of God’s law, as well as those who offered sacrifices. They were the teachers.

Second Chronicles 24:20, “The Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them,” empowered by the Holy Spirit. Not every king, not every priest, and not every prophet was empowered by the Holy Spirit. Not all of them were righteous. But those who were true kings, true priests, and true prophets were chosen by God. They were His selection, and they spoke for Him, and they were empowered to serve Him, given divine authority to represent Him. Now you have a picture of messiahs in the Old Testament.

When you come to the New Testament you realize that Jesus fulfills all of this. The Lord Jesus is the complete King/Priest/Prophet in whom the offices come together in one person. He crosses all the lines. He was divinely chosen, divinely chosen; He was sent by His Father; He possessed all authority in heaven and earth; and He was endowed with all divine power by the Holy Spirit. He is then the Messiah. He is the perfection of all of those messianic characteristics, and that is why Andrew with great joy says to Peter, “We have found the Messiah,” which indicates to us that they were expecting someone to be the combination of all of these anointed persons.

Maybe they expected it from Psalm 2 which says, “Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed,” – against His Messiah, His Messiah – “saying, ‘Let’s tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!’” This is the picture of the nations revolting against the Anointed One, the Messiah, at the end of history.

“But He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, ‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.’ I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You,’ – which I read in Hebrews 1 – ‘Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the Lord with reverence, rejoice with trembling,” – then this – “kiss the Son that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!”

The psalmist says, "The Messiah will also be the Son of God," and that's what John 20:31 says: "If you believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God," and it is the Messiah, the Son of God, that the apostles immediately began to preach. When Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost and said to them that "you have killed the Prince of life."

He then said, "But God raised Him from the dead so that all the house of Israel" – Acts 2:36 – "would know for certain that God has made Him both Lord" – that's deity – "and Messiah – this Jesus whom you crucified." That was the constant message of apostolic preaching that Jesus was the long-promised, long-awaited Messiah.

In the 4th chapter of the book of Acts, again, it's the apostles, "And they, with one accord, lift up their voice and say," – chapter 4, verse 24 – 'O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of Your father, David' – quoting Psalm 2 – 'Your servant said, "Why do the nations rage, and the people devise futile things? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ, against His Messiah.'"" And he goes on to say that's what they did. "Truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, the people of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined."

The New Testament is telling us that Jesus is that Anointed One. He is that Messiah, Son of God. All those functions find their glorious fulfillment in Him. He becomes, according to 1 Timothy 2:5, "The one mediator between God and man."

He is the one mediator. To say He is the Messiah is to say He is the mediator, because all messianic offices are mediating offices. All messianic offices are mediating offices. He mediates as king, the rule of God on earth. He mediates as priest, man to God in reconciliation. He mediates as prophet, the revelation of God to man. All three functions He rules for God. He brings men to God, and He brings the truth of God to men. Those are all mediating functions. He is the one mediator.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says, "What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer? Christ as our Redeemer executes the office of a prophet, a priest, and a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation." Messiah means mediator. He mediates the rule of God to us, He brings us to God as our mediator, and He brings the truth of God to man.

Break it out this way: a prophet, a priest, and a king are essential needs for us. Our sin has separated us from God, our sin precludes us from approaching God, and our sin has left us in ignorance. Before the fall, man enjoyed perfect communion with God, knowledge of God, fellowship with God; but with the fall came a disastrous, cataclysmic change. "Sin has" – says Isaiah 59:2 – "hidden God's face from us." We don't know God, therefore we need a prophet to tell us about Him. We have no relationship with God, we need someone to take us to God to reconcile us. And we are ruled by Satan and the kingdom of darkness, we need a new king to conquer the devil and free us from all our enemies.

Jesus fulfills all of that. When man fell, he lost the knowledge of God. That has to be renewed if man is to be saved. Man needs a prophet to reveal God. When man fell he lost the righteousness and true holiness of which he was created that enabled him to have a relationship with God. Man needs

a priest to reconcile him to God, and a priest who can provide a sacrifice that satisfies God. Man, when he fell in sin, came under the power of the enemy, destructive enemy of Satan, and Satan holds him all his lifetime in bondage. Man needs a king to reign, to subdue that enemy and every other enemy of his soul.

What we need is we need a prophet, we need a priest, we need a king, and in God's wondrous and amazing grace that's exactly what He provided in Jesus Christ. The sinner needs the Messiah. The one person who fulfills that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Many in the Old Testament were anointed ones. Many messiahs chosen, given divine authority, delegated, given power by the presence of the Holy Spirit; but none could be the true saving mediator. None is called Savior, none is called Redeemer, none is called Lord until Jesus comes. And when He is born He is identified as the Messiah, the Christ; He's identified as the Son of God; He is identified as Emmanuel, God with us; He is identified as the King; He is identified as the Savior, His name is Jesus, because He'll save His people from their sins. All of those identifications come at His birth. He was chosen by God. He says Himself that He was sent by God.

In John, chapter 6, verse 36, He reminds us in a very simple way: "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet you do not believe, you do not believe." What don't you believe? Verse 38, "That I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." God's chosen anointed King.

In the 17th chapter of John as He prays that prayer, He says in verse 3, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Messiah whom You have sent." He was sent by God.

He also bears the authority of God. In John 17, if you're there look up at verse 2, Jesus speaking to the Father says, "You gave Him" – speaking of Himself, the Son – "authority over all flesh. You gave Him authority over all flesh." That is a messianic privilege to have delegated authority. Our Lord has authority over all flesh, all flesh.

Of course, beyond that, at the end of the book of Matthew, it tells us that the Lord God has given Him all authority in heaven and on earth. And, thirdly – chosen by God, granted authority – thirdly, empowered by the Holy Spirit. "At His baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him," Luke 3:22.

Chapter 4 opens up by saying, "He was full of the Holy Spirit." Verse 14 says, "He went out to do His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit." So He fits all those messianic expectations: chosen by God, granted divine authority, and given the Holy Spirit in full power. His baptism, in a sense, it's His public anointing.

So the message of the New Testament; what is the New Testament telling us? It is introducing us to the Messiah, to the perfect King, perfect Priest, perfect Prophet. As the perfect King, the apostles tell us much about Him. I love what Paul says in Ephesians, chapter 1. Paul talks about, in verse 19, the surpassing greatness of His power, talks about the strength of His might, and then it talks about Christ who was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God in heavenly places.

And then it says about Him, "He is far above all rule and authority, and power and dominion, and every name that is named," – that's persons, not only in this age, but also in the one to come – "and He put all things in subjection under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church."

That is declaration of His sovereignty. He is sovereign over all things. He is the perfect King, perfectly chosen by the Father who possesses full authority. He is the sovereign over everyone, His rule is absolute.

In Colossians, chapter 1, it says of Him that “He created all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

And Philippians 2:10 spells it out like this: “One day every knee will bow to Him, and every knee will confess Him as Lord. On the earth, under the earth, everywhere in the universe, everyone will bow to Christ.” He is King now. He is coming in the future. He will return, He will come back, and when He comes back He will come back, Revelation says, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to reign forever. He is the perfect King.

Secondly, He’s the perfect Priest. Look at Hebrews, chapter 2. We’ll just look at a few of the passages that speak of Him as a priest. Hebrews, chapter 2 and verse 17. This is a mediator. A mediator must understand those for whom he mediates. And so Jesus became a man with us.

Verse 14 says, “Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He doesn’t give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of His people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” This is our perfect High Priest, verse 1 of chapter 3. He is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, our great High Priest – the one who mediates between us and God, the one who provides the necessary sacrifice to satisfy God as the priests did, only the difference is He is the sacrifice as well as the Priest.

Chapter 7 of Hebrews, verse 24, says, “He holds His priesthood permanently, permanently.” In the next verse, “He’s able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him.” That’s what a priest does, gives access to God. He allows us to come to God, and ever-lives to make intercession for us.

How did He enable us to do that? Verse 26, “This high priest, this holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens high priest.” How did He do it? “Not like other priests offering up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people. But He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever. We have” – verse 1 of chapter 8 – “a high priest, who having accomplished His sacrifice, took His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” He is the perfect High Priest, there’s no priest like Him.

Chapter 9, verse 14, speaks of His sacrifice: “How much more will the blood of Christ,” – the blood of

Messiah, Messiah's blood – “who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” He is the priest and He is the sacrifice. And verse 28 of that same chapter says, “So Messiah also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin,” – He took care of sin the first time He came; the second time, He brings about final salvation – “to those who eagerly await Him.”

What a priest. What an amazing, perfect priest, who is both the Priest and the sacrifice. He was a man to represent us. He mediates for us. He offered Himself as the sacrifice. He now continues to intercede for us as our sympathetic, faithful High Priest to bring us to eternal glory.

And, thirdly, He's the perfect Prophet. His messages were nothing but the truth. I read you Hebrews 1 earlier just to remind you that God in the Old Testament spoke to us in many portions and in many ways in the prophets. But in these last days, New Testament, He spoke to us in His Son, in His Son. His Son is the most perfect revelation of God. He is the Prophet that Moses spoke about in Deuteronomy 18: “There will come one who will be a prophet, a prophet like me and yet not like me.” Moses would say, “He's a prophet that has some similarities to me in the fact that He represents God and speaks for God,” but, certainly, much more than Moses.

Listen to Deuteronomy 18:15, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.” Verse 18, “I'll raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I'll put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.”

That's the Prophet Jesus who spoke only the word of God. “I never say anything” – He said – “the Father didn't show Me to say, tell me to say. I speak only the Father's word,” that's His testimony, John, chapter 7, verse 16. Faithful Prophet, the most faithful Prophet. Jesus says, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.” John 7:16, “My teaching is not Mine, but his who sent Me.” Faithful Prophet who spoke for God and only for God.

Chapter 12 of John, verse 49, “I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.” My, what a prophet. Perfect King, the perfect Priest, the perfect Prophet.

How do we know? We have the testimony of Scripture. This is the Messiah. He fulfills all the anticipated predictions. And the fact that He's the Messiah is validated.

Back to John 20:31, it's validated by His miracles. “He performed many signs which aren't recorded in this book; but the ones that are recorded are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and believing have life in His name.” What more proof do you need?

And last week we went over a list of the miracles that John records to give testimony of His divine character. But the final miracle that validated Him is the resurrection, is the resurrection. And that's where Peter draws the power of His sermon. “You” – he says in Acts 2 – “you killed Him. You nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men put Him to death. But God raised Him up,” again, putting an end to the agony of death; and thus God fulfilled Psalm 16: “I saw the Lord always in my presence. He is at my right hand that I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad, my tongue exalts,

moreover my flesh also will live in hope, because you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will you allow your Holy One to undergo decay. You have made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence.”

“Brethren,” – verse 29 – “I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that He both died and was buried, and His tomb is with us to this day.” He wasn’t talking about David. But verse 32, “This Jesus, God raised up again to which we are all witnesses, and in doing that” – verse 36 – “God made Him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” So all the miracles testified that He is the Messiah, and the culminating miracle is His resurrection.

The disciples had a little struggle with His death. They didn’t really understand that Messiah was going to die. They didn’t know the meaning of Isaiah 53, for example, or Psalm 22, which describes His death. And so on the day of the resurrection in Luke 24, Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus to tell the disciples who think the whole thing has ended with the death of Jesus, that Messiah needed to suffer; and he went back to Moses and the law and the holy writings and the prophets and spoke of the things concerning His suffering and glory.

And then on resurrection day He showed up that night with all the apostles and, again, showed them that the Messiah had to suffer and die. And Luke 24 says, “He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms, that the Messiah would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day. So who is the Messiah? It is none other than Jesus Christ, none other. No one else can fulfill the Old Testament picture.

Tragedy of tragedy, of course, is recorded early in the gospel of John: “He came unto His own and His own” what? “received Him not.” All the centuries of waiting for the Messiah, and when He came they rejected Him. And they still do, and the world still does. But He will return a second time, and there will be no atonement for sin then. He will return to bring about His great and final salvation. So that’s the office of messiah. Next time I want to talk to you about the person, the Messiah as to His nature, and then His ministry. Let’s bow in prayer.

Lord, we are so enriched by the truth of Your Word. We’re so captivated by its glory, its brilliance, its consistency, it’s power, its clarity, its beauty, and by its fulfillment. All that the Old Testament said pointed like one massive revelatory arrow right at Jesus as the Messiah, the chosen anointed King/Priest/Prophet: the great High Priest, the Living Word, and the King of Kings, who fulfilled every prophecy, including the need to suffer and rise from the dead.

Lord, we pray that You would be so gracious as to take the scales off the eyes of those who cannot see this, that You would grant them sight where there has been blindness and understanding where there has been ignorance, and that You would show the glory of Christ through the glory of Scripture to many hearts today. Even for those of us who are believers who maybe haven’t even thought about the range of magnificent scriptural reality that is bound up in just the word “Christ,” the Anointed One. May we rejoice in a fresh way as we think of the truth concerning Him.

Father, now work in all our hearts. Give us a full picture of the glory of our Savior, and open hearts to see the one they have not yet seen until this very day. Grant that the darkness would disappear and the ignorance would be gone, and they would believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and believing have life in His name.

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