

Of the Prophetic Office of Christ.

by John Gill

Christ's prophetic office is a vital part of his ministry, through which he foretells future events, interprets the law, and ministers the word to his people.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:18, Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 4:23, Matthew 10:17-18, Matthew 11:2-5, Luke 7:16, John 1:17, John 6:14, Hebrews 1:1-2, Revelation 3:14

Topics: "Prophetic Office of Christ", "Jesus as Mediator"

Description

John Gill expounds on the prophetic office of Christ, emphasizing that Jesus fulfills the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King, which are essential for the salvation of His people. He highlights that Christ's prophetic role was foretold in the Scriptures and confirmed through His miracles, which demonstrated His authority and divine nature. Gill explains that Jesus, as the ultimate Prophet, not only preached the Gospel but also foretold future events, including His own death and resurrection. He underscores that Christ's teachings and actions were in perfect alignment with God's will, making Him the definitive messenger of truth. The sermon concludes by affirming that Christ continues to exercise His prophetic office through His Spirit and ministers today.

Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 5--Chapter 9

OF THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF CHRIST

Having gone through Christ's estates of humiliation and exaltation, I shall next consider the offices sustained and executed by him in those estates. His office in general is that of Mediator, which is but one; the branches of it are threefold, his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices; all which are included in his name, Messiah, or Christ, the anointed; prophets, priests, and kings, being anointed, when invested with their several offices; as Elisha the prophet, by Elijah; Aaron the priest, and his sons, by Moses; Saul, David, and Solomon, kings of Israel: these offices seldom, if ever, met in one person; Melchizedek was king and priest, but not a prophet; Aaron was prophet and priest, but not a king; David and Solomon were kings and prophets, but not priests: the greatest appearance of them was in Moses, but whether all together is not so clear; he was a prophet, none like him arose in Israel till the Messiah came; he was king in Jeshurun; and officiated as a priest, before his brother Aaron was invested with that office, but not

afterwards: but in Christ they all meet; he is a Prophet mighty in deed and word, a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and is King of kings and Lord of lords.

The case and condition of his people required him to take upon him and execute these offices. They are dark, blind, and ignorant, and need a prophet to enlighten, teach, and instruct them, and make known the mind and will of God unto them; they are sinful, guilty creatures, as all the world are before God, and need a Priest to make atonement for them; in their unconverted state they are enemies to God, and disobedient to him, and need a powerful Prince to subdue them; to cause his arrows to be sharp in their hearts, whereby they fall under him, and become willing to serve him, in the day of his power: and in their converted state are weak and helpless, and need a King to rule over them, protect and defend them.

And though there are many other names and titles of Christ, yet they are all reducible to these offices of Prophet, Priest, and King: and it may be observed, that these are executed by Christ in the order in which they are here put: he first exercised the prophetic office, which he entered into upon his baptism, and continued it throughout his life: at his death, as a Priest, he offered himself a sacrifice to God for the sins of his people, and now ever lives to make intercession for them; and upon his ascension to heaven, was made and declared Lord and Christ, and sits as a King on his throne, and has been ever since exercising his kingly office; and will do so more apparently hereafter.

I shall begin, With his prophetic office; which was foretold in the writings of Moses and the prophets; the proof and evidence of which, as belonging to Jesus, lies in his miracles; each of the parts of his office will be inquired into; and the time of his execution of it. 1. First, It was foretold that Christ should appear in the character of a Prophet, and therefore was expected by the Jews as such; hence when they saw the miracles he wrought, they said; "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14), meaning, that was prophesied of by Moses, to whom the Lord said, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee" (Deut. 18:18,15), which cannot be understood of a succession of prophets, as say the Jews;[1] for a single Person is only spoken of: and this not Joshua, nor David, nor Jeremiah; only Jesus of Nazareth, to whom they are applied (Acts 3:22 7:37), and with whom all the characters agree: he was "raised" up of God as a Prophet; this the people of the Jews were sensible of; and therefore glorified God on that account, and considered it as a kind and gracious visitation of his (Luke 7:16).

He was raised up "from among his brethren", being the Son of Abraham, the Son of David; of the tribe of Judah; born in Bethlehem; and so was of the Israelites, according to the flesh: he was "like unto Moses"; a prophet, like unto him, and greater than he; as the law came by Moses, grace and truth came by Christ: as Moses was raised up, and sent to be a redeemer of Israel out of Egypt; Christ was raised up, and sent to be a Saviour and Redeemer of his people, from a worse than Egyptian bondage: as Moses was faithful in the house of God, so Jesus; they are compared together, but the preference is given to Christ (Heb. 3:2-6).

The words of God were "put into the mouth" of Christ; the doctrine, he preached was not his own, but his Father's; he spoke not of himself; what he spoke, as the Father said unto him, so he spoke; and he spoke "all" that he received from him, and that he commanded him; and so was faithful to him that appointed him (John 7:16; 8:29; 12:49,50 15:15; 17:6,8), and therefore to be hearkened to; as his Father directed his apostles to do; saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him": plainly referring to the above prophecy (Matthew 17:5).

The qualifications of Christ for this prophetic office were also foretold; which lie in the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which he received without measure: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek" (Isa. 61:1), from which passage of scripture Christ preached his first sermon, at Nazareth; and having read the text, said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-21 see also Isa. 11:1,2).

There are also several names of Christ, by which he is called in the Old Testament, which refer to his prophetic office; as a Messenger, the messenger of the covenant, whose work it was to explain it, and declare the sense of it; the same with the apostle of our profession, "an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness"; an interpreter of the mind and will of God, who lay in his bosom, and has revealed it, and whose business it was to preach righteousness, even his own, in the great congregation, and has done it (Job 33:23; Ps. 40:9).

He goes by the name of "Wisdom", who cries and calls to the sons of men, and gives instructions to them (Prov. 1:20 8:1,2). He is called a "Counselor"; not only because he was concerned in the council of peace; but because he gives counsel and advice in the Gospel, and by ministering of it, both to saints and sinners (Isa. 9:6; Rev. 3:18). He is represented as a "Teacher" of the ways of God, and of the truths of the Gospel, called his law, or doctrine (Isa. 2:2,3; 42:4; Joel 2:23).

Likewise, as a "Speaker", who has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season (Isa. 50:4; 52:6; Heb. 2:3). Moreover, he is called a "Light" to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the Jews; and to give a clear knowledge of the truth as it is in himself (Isa. 9:2; 42:6). And likewise, "a Witness of the people" (Isa. 55:4), and to bear witness to the truth he came into the world; and a faithful witness he is (John 18:37; Rev. 3:14). All which belonged to, and pointed at the prophetic office of Christ, and have all appeared and met in our Jesus; yea, the very place, and more particular parts of Judea, where he was chiefly to exercise as a prophet were foretold; see (Isa. 9:1 compared with Matthew 4:12-15). 2.

Secondly, The evidence and proof of Jesus being that prophet that was to come, are the miracles which were wrought by him: upon Christ's working the miracle of feeding five thousand persons with five loaves and two small fishes; some of the Jews, that saw the miracle, were convinced, and said, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). And upon his raising from the dead the widow's son of Naim, as he was carrying to the grave, they said, "A great Prophet is risen up among us" (Luke 7:16).

So Nicodemus was convinced that Christ was "a Teacher come from God", from his miracles (John 3:2). The Jews expected, that when the Messiah came he would do many and great miracles; as they had just reason for it; for it was foretold he should (Isa. 35:4-6), therefore, when they saw what kind of miracles, and what numerous ones were wrought by Christ, some of the Jews were convinced by them that he was the Christ (John 7:31). When John sent two of his disciples to Christ, to inquire of him, whether he was "he that should come", the prophet that was to come; or whether they were to "look for another"; he bids them go and tell John what they had seen and heard, meaning the miracles wrought by him, which he particularly mentions, and closes the account with saying, "the poor have the gospel preached to them"; plainly intimating, that he was that prophet that should preach glad tidings to the poor; and his miracles were a confirmation of it (Matthew 11:2-5).

And he frequently appeals to his miracles, not only as proofs of his Deity, but of his Messiahship (John 5:36; 10:37,38), which miracles were true and undoubted ones; they were such as exceed the laws and

power of nature; what a mere creature could never perform: nor could they be attributed to diabolical influence; for Satan, had he a power to work miracles, Would never assist in them, to confirm doctrines subversive of his kingdom and interest, as our Lord argues (Matthew 12:24-26).

Nor did Christ ever work any miracles to serve any temporal interest of his own, but purely for the good of men, and the glory of God; and these were openly and publicly done, and liable to the strictest examination; so that there could be no fraud nor deceit in them. The next thing to be considered is, 3. Thirdly, The parts of the prophetic office executed by Christ; and which lay, 3a. First, In foretelling future events; as he is God omniscient, he knew all things future, even the more contingent, and did foretell them; as of a colt tied at a certain place, which he bid his disciples go and loose; and intimated to them what would be said by the owners of it, and what they should say to them; and of a man's carrying of a pitcher of water, whom his disciples were to follow, which would lead them to the master of a house, where the passover was to be provided for him and them (Mark 11:2-6; 14:13,16).

But more particularly and especially, Christ foretold his sufferings and death; and the kind and manner of it, crucifixion (Matthew 16:21; 20:18,19; John 12:31,32), the means by which his death should be brought about, by one of his disciples betraying him into the hands of his enemies: he knew from the beginning who would betray him; and declared to his disciples in general, that one of them would do it; and to Judas in particular he directed his discourse, and bid him do what he did quickly: and when the time drew nigh for the execution of the scheme Judas had formed, Christ said to his disciples with him, "He is at hand that doth betray me"; and immediately Judas appeared with a great multitude, and a band of soldiers, to seize on Jesus, upon a signal given them (John 6:64; 13:18,21; Matthew 26:46,47).

Christ foretold the behavior of his disciples towards him, upon his being apprehended, that they would all be offended with him and forsake him; and that, particularly, Peter would deny him thrice before the cock crew: all which exactly came to pass (Matthew 26:31; 26:34,56,74,75). Likewise, his resurrection from the dead, on the third day; which he gave out, both in more obscure and figurative expressions, and in more plain and easy ones, and directed to the sign of the prophet Jonah, as a token of it; and notwithstanding all the precautions of the Jews, so it came about, who owned, that in his lifetime he predicted it (John 2:19; Matthew 16:21; 12:39,40; 27:63-66).

He spoke beforehand of the treatment and usage his disciples should meet with from men after he was gone; that they should be delivered up to councils, and scourged in synagogues, and be brought before kings and governors for his sake; and that they should be put to death, and those that killed them think they did God good service: all which came to pass, and was fulfilled in all his disciples (Matthew 10:17,18; John 16:2). He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem; the signs going before of it, its distresses, and what followed upon it (Matthew 24:1-51), which, in every particular, was accomplished, as the History of Josephus abundantly shows.

To observe no more, the Book of the Revelation is a prophecy delivered by Christ to John, concerning all that were to befall the church and world, so far as the church was concerned with it, from the resurrection of Christ to his second coming; the greater part of which has been most amazingly fulfilled; and there is the utmost reason to believe the rest will be fulfilled in due time. 3b. Secondly, Another part of the prophetic office of Christ lay in the ministration of the word; which is sometimes in scripture called prophecy (1 Cor. 14:3), and this was not only exercised by Christ, in interpreting the law, giving the true sense of it, and pointing out its spirituality and extensiveness, and vindicating it from the false glosses of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:1-48), but chiefly in preaching the gospel; for which he was in the highest

degree qualified; and was most assiduous in it, preaching it in one city, and then in another, whereunto he was sent, and that throughout all Galilee, and other parts (Luke 4:43; Matthew 4:23), and which he delivered with such authority as the Scribes and Pharisees did not (Matthew 7:29), even the whole of it; declaring all that he had heard of the Father, and who spoke his whole mind and will by him; and so sealed up prophecy: hence no regard is now to be had to the pretended prophecy and revelations of men, inconsistent with the word of God (John 1:17; 15:15; Heb. 1:1,2; Dan. 9:24), and which he taught freely, boldly, and without fear or respect of persons, as the Jews themselves acknowledged (Matthew 22:16 and with such wisdom, prudence, and eloquence, as never man spake (John 7:46), and with such gracefulness, and such gracious words, grace being poured into his lips, as was astonishing to those that heard him (Ps. 45:2; Luke 4:22), and this part of his prophetic office lay not only in the external ministry of the word, but in a powerful and internal illumination of the mind, in opening the heart, as Lydia's was, to attend to the things spoken; and in opening the understanding to understand the Scriptures, and to receive and embrace the truths thereof; the word coming not in word only, but with power, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance. 4.

Fourthly, The time when this office was executed by Christ; and it may be observed, that this office may be considered as executed either "immediately" or "mediately". 4a. Immediately, by Christ, in his own Person, by himself; and this was here on earth, in his state of humiliation; for he came a Teacher from God; being sent and anointed by him to preach the gospel; and on which office he entered quickly after his baptism, and continued in the exercise of it until his death; but only to the lost sheep of Israel, to whom he was sent, and to them only did he give his apostles a commission to preach the gospel during that time; for he was "a Minister of the circumcision"; that is, a Minister to the circumcised Jews, and to them only (Rom. 15:8). 4b.

Mediately, by his Spirit, and by the prophets of the Old Testament, and by the apostles and ministers of the New; and in this sense he exercised the office of a Prophet both before and after his state of humiliation. 4b1. Before his incarnation: he did indeed sometimes personally appear in an human form, and preached the gospel to men, as to our first parents in the garden of Eden, immediately after their fall; declaring, that "the Seed of the woman", meaning himself, would "break the serpent's head": and thus the gospel, strictly speaking, "began to be first spoken by the Lord" (Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:3).

And so, under the name of the Angel of the Lord, and very probably in an human form, he appeared to Abraham, and preached the gospel to him; saying, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:15-18; Gal. 3:8). He was with the thousands of angels at mount Sinai, even he who ascended on high, and led captivity captive: he was with Moses in the wilderness, to whom he spoke at Sinai; and gave unto him the lively oracles of God (Ps. 68:17,18; Acts 7:38).

But at other times we read of his preaching by his Spirit unto men; Noah was a preacher of righteousness, even of the righteousness of faith; and Christ preached in him, and by him: he, by his Spirit, went and preached to the ungodly world, to those who were disobedient in the times of Noah; the same who in the times of the apostle were spirits in prison: and as Christ was spoken of by all the holy prophets that were from the beginning of the world; so he, by his Spirit, spoke in them, and testified of his own sufferings, and the glory that should follow (1 Pet. 3:18-20; 1:11). 4b2.

Christ continued to exercise his prophetic office, after his state of humiliation was over, and he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him; for he appeared to his disciples after that, and expounded to them the scriptures concerning himself, and opened their understanding, that they might understand them; and

spoke unto them of the things concerning the kingdom of God, and instructed them in them, and renewed their commission to preach and baptize, and enlarged it; promised his presence with them, and with their successors to the end of the world; and by them, and not in his own person, after his ascension to heaven, he went and preached peace to them that were nigh, and to them that were afar off, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ speaking in and by his ministers; so that they that hear them, hear him; and they that despise them, despise him: and so he continues, and will continue, to exercise his prophetic office in and by his ministers, and by his Spirit attending their ministrations, throughout all ages, to the end of time, until he has gathered in all his chosen ones. ENDNOTES:

[1] See my Book of Prophecies literally fulfilled in Jesus, p. 134, &c.

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