

Jesus the Prophet

1 Kings 17:1-16 Isaiah 61:1-3 Luke 4:14-30

January 22, 2023
Pastor Dave Bolte



One of the prophecies of the Messiah was that He would be a prophet like Moses, but greater than Moses, because He would speak the very words of God as God¹. Jesus is that *Prophet* that God promised to send; who as the Son of God, speaks the very words of God as God Himself!

When you think of Jesus as the Prophet who speaks the words of God, He is not only greater than Moses, He is greater than all of the Prophets.

The role of prophet in the Old Testament included three things: *speaking for God*, *working miracles*, and *suffering rejection*. Jesus will do all three of these things. The bulk of His work was *teaching and working miracles*. The Gospel's record much of His teaching and many of His miracles. Jesus' earthly life ends by *rejection* from the Jews and *suffering* crucifixion by the Romans. The Prophet sent from God *suffers and dies* like many Old Testament prophets → but Jesus' suffering and death was for us and for our salvation²! His suffering and death has eternal significance for every single person!

As we continue in this season of Epiphany, we are looking at stories in Jesus' life that reveals that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God.

- ⇒ The visit of the Magi, the Gentiles from the east, revealed that He is a great King and the Savior of all men of all nations and all languages.
- ⇒ His baptism was a public demonstration by the Holy Trinity that revealed that He is the long-awaited Messiah of the Old Testament times, the One sent to do the work of salvation on our behalf.

¹ Deuteronomy 18:18 is the prophecy: "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put My words in His mouth. He will tell them everything I command Him."

² Dr. A.A. Just in his commentary Luke writes, "Jesus completes the long line of suffering prophets who shed their blood in Jerusalem. Yet His suffering and death begin the martyrdom of New Testament apostles. (p.836)"

Today we have a significant sermon of Jesus. It's considered His *inaugural sermon*. Early in His Ministry, He has been Baptized and then Tempted in the wilderness for 40 days by the devil; and now He is being led by the Holy Spirit to His hometown of Nazareth. Jesus is filled with power as He preaches this sermon.

And He will need that power! You know, this is going to be a tough sermon! Jesus is in Nazareth; His own hometown. Everybody knows Him . . . but they know Him as a little boy who grew up in their village; they know him as a teenager and young adult; they know Him as the son of Mary and Joseph. **They do not know Him as the Messiah** . . . that is, until He preaches in their synagogue → the same synagogue that He grew up in and has worshipped in all of his life!

The Gospel of Luke records the sermon for us.

On the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Unrolling it, He found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:16-20

Jesus is quoting from the prophet Isaiah and proclaiming that **He Himself is the Messiah!** He is saying that these Messianic verses are talking about Him! Jesus is announcing that the new Messianic era is here; and He is the Messiah³!

Remember, this is going to be a tough sermon for Jesus to preach; not only because *"no prophet is accepted in his hometown"*, but much more so, because He is proclaiming to be the long awaited Messiah!

³ When you read the Gospels, look for the two ways that Jesus demonstrates that the Messianic era is here: Teaching and Miracles. **Jesus' powerful miracles are meant to confirm that His teaching is true.** The Messianic era is here! This then culminates at the cross, where Jesus' suffering and death finalizes the work of salvation. Jesus continues to "teach and work miracles" in His Church today, and even into our own lives, through His Word (teaching) and Sacraments (miracles).

The people of Nazareth understand exactly what Jesus is saying, and for them it is **BLASPHEMY**. The people were *furiously*; they took Him outside and intended to kill Him by *throwing Him off of a cliff*. That's a pretty violent reaction⁴!

This reminds us that **Jesus divides people**. When some people hear the gospel of eternal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, they recoil, hide from it, avoid it, deny it, and are even hostile to it. Jesus explains that people love the darkness and they hate the light. They love their sin, rebellion and immorality. People have no intention of repenting of their sin and admitting their sinfulness. So they reject Christ and are even hostile to it⁵. They harden their hearts when they hear God's Word and they turn away from the Savior of the world.

Don't be surprised if you experience that when you try to talk about Christ and the Gospel. **Jesus divides people**; it is the nature of the Gospel. We understand it because Jesus has told us. We can expect hostility, but yet we continue to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! It's the only way for people to have eternal salvation!

For us who believe, the Gospel of eternal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ is truly **Good News!** God the Holy Spirit has worked to reveal the depth of our sinfulness. Our rebellion and immorality is seen as we disobey the commandments of God; we neither love God nor our neighbor. To use the words of Isaiah, we are *prisoners, blinded, and oppressed in captivity*. We have no way out; we have no escape; we have no hope in ourselves.

But that is exactly why God sent His Son; we are just like the Old Testament people who needed the coming Messiah. Jesus is that Messiah, the Christ, and He will set us free!

⁴ This is a foreshadow of how Jesus will be accepted by the Jews. They will charge Him with blasphemy (for claiming to be the Son of God, that is equal to God); and as a lawbreaker (for healing on the Sabbath.) See John 5:18.

⁵ Jesus calls it a "crisis" (judgment) in John 3:19-21. One commentator writes, "People don't want God interfering with what they consider 'a good time,' and they don't believe the warnings of Scripture that they are under God's judgment now and will face it eternally when they die. People think that they're basically good and that God will overlook their faults and give them credit for their good deeds on Judgment day. So they don't repent of their sin and believe in Jesus Christ to save them from God's judgment." "Lesson 18: Why People Reject Christ (John 3:19-21)," Steven J. Cole, July 7, 2013, Bible.org

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Luke 4:18-19

THAT IS PURE GOSPEL! Jesus describes His work as Messiah as “*setting people free.*” Twice Jesus uses the word for forgiveness that means “*to set free.*”

Freedom from sin, guilt, and death is a powerful gospel image. Because of the work of Jesus, His life and His death, you are set free from the power of sin. You are set free from a guilty conscience. You are set free from the terror of death. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, sin has no power over you, you have peace with God rather than a guilty conscience, and you have already been given the gift of eternal life so that there is no fear in death and dying. You have been set free in the Lord Jesus Christ! **Your sins are FORGIVEN⁶!**

Rather than living in captivity, fear, and death, you now live a life of freedom! You are free in Christ!

- ⇒ You are free to grow in faith, to study God's Word, to worship the Lord each week, to understand the truths of God's Kingdom, to share your faith, to use your gifts in service!
- ⇒ You are free to live a life pleasing to your Father in Heaven, to hallow His Name, to let His Kingdom come, to allow His Will be done in your life!
- ⇒ You are free to love your neighbor, to help them, serve them, to care about them. You are free to come along side your neighbor and love them without expecting anything in return! You can be patient and kind to all people, even your enemies!

You are free in Christ!

The Spirit of the Lord was on Jesus; not just that day, but everyday! He has done the work of salvation for the entire world: He has set you free from your sins! The prisoners are free! The blind can see! And the oppressed are released!

In Christ, you are truly set free; and you live in the “*Lord's favor*” every day of your life! Amen!

⁶ Jesus uses the Greek word ἄφεσις frequently. It is usually translated as “forgiveness”; the word picture is that of being set free from bondage or imprisonment. The word is used to describe John the Baptist's preaching (Mark 1:4), it's used in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:12), it is the benefit of Holy Baptism (Acts 2:38), it describes the OT prophets preaching (Acts 10:43), it is the gift of receiving Holy Communion (Matt 26:28), and it describes the goal of the Great Commission of the Church (Luke 24:47). There are MANY other uses of this word also!

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Messiah of the Old Testament, the Savior of all the world. We thank you for setting us free from our sin. Grant us faith so that we know, understand, and believe this throughout our lives. Help us to live our lives in the freedom we have in you. Help us to live free from sin, free from guilt, and free from the fear of death and dying. Help us to live bold and courageous lives of faith, helping others to know and believe in you as their Lord and Savior. Amen!

1 Kings 17:1-16

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe[a] in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.” 2 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 3 “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.” 5 So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. 7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” 11 As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” 12 “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.” 13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’” 15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

Isaiah 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,^[a]2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

Luke 4:14-30

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” 22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked. 23 Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’” 24 “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.” 28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

