

## **Who is This King of Glory Part 2: The King Has Spoken**

February 2009

In December 2008, I began an article series discussing the Old Testament prophecies of Christ, specifically, His birth in the incarnation which is celebrated as Christmas. We found that Matthew is especially helpful in pointing to Old Testament prophets in his account of Jesus. This month, I want to continue this line of thinking with the question of how Jesus fulfilled prophecy with His ministry while here on earth.

The Messiah was the anointed one or splattered one. Jesus fulfilled three different Old Testament roles throughout His ministry: prophet, priest, and king. Kings and priests were anointed as part of setting them apart to God for His use. Kings were anointed by prophets such as Saul (1 Sam 10) and David (1 Sam 16). These kings were anointed with oil so that the people respected the office God had put in place to bring leadership. God alone was true King over Israel and these men who became kings were consecrated to be His agents of leadership, to do His will for the nation.

So also priests, such as Aaron (Exod 29, Psa 133:2) are anointed in the Old Testament as well and set apart. They are God's link with humanity and carry out the sacrifices that result from the people's inability to fully follow the Law set down by Moses. This is why it was better to obey than to sacrifice. In obedience, a human can show his or her love for God (John 14:15, 21). But sacrifice

is the penalty for not keeping a connection of love for God in violating His commands. So priests were the last stop-gap, the final line between sinful humans who could not follow the law because their very nature is corrupt. It is these smattered ones who atoned for the people by providing the services of the priest to cover the multitudes of sins, the way out of disobeying the Law.

Finally, prophets served a necessary function in Israel. While kings led people into the will of God by political might and authority given to them by God and priests provided for the atonement of sins and the teaching of the way of God to live, the prophets maintained an office that always kept the people's vision on God's Laws. In times of idolatry and rampant wickedness, prophets spoke as God's mouthpieces to the nation. They addressed everything in the nation from ethics to religion, from poor treatment of the poor to prideful idolatry and self-sufficiency. The prophets acted in the Spirit of God by bringing the people of God to the truth of their sin and waywardness, calling them back into loving relationship and crying out in the dark despair of the people's rejection of the Lord.

So too, Jesus fulfilled all three of these offices in His ministry. As prophet, Jesus performed some similar miracles as the prophets, spoke to the people with the same compassion mixed with scathing rebuke, and called the people to a right and true

relationship with God. He acted as prophet in His seven woes to the city of Jerusalem (Matt 23). Everything Jesus said in His ministry, especially calling people to live in the midst of the Kingdom of God to an intimate relationship with Him (see especially Matt 5-7). He even raised a widow's son at a funeral like Elijah (Compare Luke 7:11-17 with 1 Kings 17:17-24)! Jesus clearly was a prophet and believed to be a prophet by the people at the very least (Matt 16:14; Mark 8:28; Luke 9:19, also Matt 14:5).

His priestly role excellently portrayed by the writer to the Hebrews becomes so wrapped up in the sacrifice of the cross at Calvary. As the one who died upon the cross, Jesus fulfilled the role of the ultimate High Priest, making the one and only needed atonement for all of humanity in one sacrificial death. John calls Him "the Lamb," pointing to the passion narratives in which the Lamb is slaughtered for sin. As priest, Jesus paid the price needed to mediate and reconcile the relationship between a holy God and an unholy humanity.

His care for the whole world and not just Israelites can be seen in His priestly act of cleansing the temple (Matt 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-22), making it once again a house of prayer for the nations instead of a marketplace where Gentiles could only enter into God's presence to a certain point. He made it possible for every believer to become a temple or house for God's presence through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

His kingly role is seen more subtly in the gospels. The people commonly understood that the Messiah would be a king, so even at Jesus' birth, Herod sought to kill Him because he was worried for his own throne.

But Jesus most clearly displays His kingship in the last week of His life. It begins as He rides into the city of Jerusalem on a never-before ridden colt, which fulfills prophecy about the Messianic King from Zechariah 9:9.

This king was not what the disciples and the people had wanted. They were not looking for a king who could save their souls. They were looking for a king who would raise a military that would save them from Rome. The triumphal entry describes the riding of the King into Jerusalem with the blessings that came along with it (See Matt 21:1-10; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38; John 12:12-15). Along with this discussion is an interesting conversation in John between Pilot and Jesus at His arrest in which Pilot asks Him if He is a king. He answers yes and then tells Pilot that He is the King of a different kingdom. Jesus' kingdom at that time was out of this world (John 18:33-38).

The gospels depict some specific prophetic utterances which Jesus fulfilled during ministry. As He began His ministry, Jesus read in His local synagogue a special passage out of Isaiah 61 that told of the Messiah's mode of operation. It spoke of the things the Messiah would do when empowered by the Spirit of the Lord, such as setting the captives free, bringing good news to the poor, and other observable signs. Everyone in that synagogue knew that this was a Messianic prophecy and Jesus ended the reading by saying that these things are now fulfilled in their hearing. He proclaimed Himself to be the Messiah (Luke 4:16-21).

This then is what Jesus did in His ministry as He proclaimed the gospel to the people. The proclamation was accompanied by signs and wonders and healings, deliverances and

miracles. Jesus was fulfilling prophecy about Himself with every single thing He did and said. When Jesus began His ministry, Matthew even describes His move from Nazareth to Capernaum as a fulfillment of Isaiah 9:1-2 (Matt 4:12-17). In fact, Matthew says this explicitly referencing the famous Servant Song of Isaiah 53 as he speaks of Jesus healing many in Matthew 8:14-17. This is the same editorial comment Matthew makes later about the same healing power in 12:17 and following, citing Isaiah 42:1-3, part of another Servant Song. Matthew continues by saying that even Jesus' parables fulfilled prophecy spoken by either Isaiah or a psalmist (Matt 13:34-35).

One of the more interesting fulfillments of prophecy is the people's unbelief in Him. Have you ever wondered how everyone could miss all the signs as you've read? Well, that's one of the prophecies being fulfilled as well. Isaiah said that the people would always be hearing but never listening, seeing, but always blind (Isaiah 6:10). In John 12:37-41, John tells his readers that the people's unbelief is also a sign of Jesus deity and Messiahship. Isaiah saw the Lord in Isaiah 6, who John confirms was Jesus! But the people would not believe in His glory, so they fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about Him.

These are some of the prophecies Jesus fulfilled within His ministry. As He walked and talked and healed and comforted, everything He did and said confirmed prophecy because the prophets had been waiting for so long for the Messiah to arrive. Indeed, the whole cloud of witnesses in the Old Testament longed for this promised Prophet, Priest, and King. With every breath Jesus proclaimed His divinity. With every action He confirmed that divinity and His fulfillment of Old Testament Law and prophetic vision. There is no doubt in the

mind of someone who sees all of the signs. It would have been much harder to see Him when He arrived as Messiah, because the people were not seeking a Messiah like Him.

They were looking for a military leader, a political king who would stand up to the other nations and get them out of their fixes. They were looking for another David or even another Saul. But they did not think of the all-encompassing role that Jesus had as a Messiah, one who did not just fix some political situation but set them free from this whole world. That's what Jesus has done for them, for you, and for me. He has done it for everyone. Jesus didn't just come to save one nation, but the whole world. He fulfilled the prophecies not of some national deity, but of the very God of the universe. Jesus healed so many people and preached to so many people during His ministry. And He continues to minister to the world today through His Church.