

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—
Lesson 19—Christ our Prophet, Q. 24

Introduction

*When we speak of the three offices of Christ, it's important to remember that these are not three separate offices as such, but three functions of the one indivisible office of Mediator—which is how the one Man Christ can hold all three. What we're distinguishing in these three offices are really three functions, because in their exercise, they necessarily qualify one another. Hodge: "Thus, when he teaches, he is essentially a royal and priestly teacher; and when he rules, he is a priestly and prophetic king, and when he either atones or intercedes, he is a prophetic and kingly priest."

**In other words*, Christ doesn't *cease* from one office when He *functions* in another. These aren't *separate* hats He wears which must be exchanged the one for the other before He can serve; but they are three functions under the *one* hat and appointment of Mediator, cf. Ps 110.1-4; Mt 3.17

I. What is a prophet?

A. Essentially a prophet is one who speaks for another, Ex 7.1-2. And therefore a prophet of God is one qualified and authorized to speak for God to men. The foretelling of future events is only incidental to the office.

II. In the OT the Lord used many men as prophets, as spokespersons (e.g. Moses, Nathan, Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah).

A. These men were instruments to make the word of the Lord known to His people. They declared the word of the Lord, Ex 8.20; 2Sam 7.5; 1Kgs 20.35; Isa 28.16. And these men served as types and foreshadows of both of the *mediation* Christ would provide between God and His people and the *office itself* which Christ holds for His people: the office of the LORD's prophet.

B. Christ is the preeminent Prophet of God, the one promised by Moses to reveal the will of the Lord, Dt 18.15, 18; cf. Acts 3.17-26

C. Christ is the Lord's prophet in a sense in which no one ever was. He has the whole prophetic life in Himself. Whyte, "He has the pathos of an Isaiah, the melancholy of an Hosea, the meekness of a Jeremiah, the joy in the nature of an Amos, the power of observation of the proverb-writers, and the whole world of feeling of the psalmists," they all inhere and come to their fullest expression in Him.

D. Christ is not only *a* prophet, but *the* prophet. He alone knows the deep things of God and adequately and authoritatively speak for Him, Mt 5.21-22; Lk 9.26; 8.21; 21.33; Jn 5.24, 47; 12.47-48; Rev 3.10

III. Christ executes this office in three grand successive stages of development, following the progress of redemption.

A. Before His incarnation He was the one who appeared to the patriarchs. He was the eternal Word of the Lord speaking to the prophets and directing them in what to say on His behalf. He was the Truth made known to the hearts of the saints by the Spirit. He was the one who spoke to our fathers in the OT through dreams, visions, voices from heaven, Urim and Thummim. By whatever means He pleased, He was the one instrumentally revealing the will of God in the OT, 1Pet 1.11; 3.18-20

B. Since His incarnation He made clear that He spoke for and revealed God and that His words were to be heeded as the very words and revelation of God, Jn 8.28; 14.24; Mt 11.27-28; Jn 14.8-11; Rev 1.1

C. Throughout eternity in glory, Rev 4.2-3 with 5.1-6

IV. How does Christ execute this office of prophet?

A. *Immediately* in His own person, Lk 9.26; 21.33

B. *Mediately*

1. Through His Spirit:

- a) by inspiration of the Word, 2Tim 3.16; 2Pet 1.21
- b) by spiritual illumination, Jn 14.26; 16.13-14; 1Jn 2.26-27; Lk 24.45
- 2. Through the officers of His church:
 - a) Those inspired as apostles of the Lord, Mt 10.40; 28.18-20; Jn 17.8
 - b) Those anointed as ministers of the Word of God, 1Tim 3.2; 4.6, 11-16; 4.17; 6.2-4; 13-14; 2Tim 2.14-15, 24-25; 3.14-17; 4.1-5, 13, 14-17

V. What is the divine will which Christ has come to reveal to us?

- A. He has come to declare the will of God for our salvation, Jn 20.31; Tit 2.11-14. Boston, “The great design of the gospel revelation is to show what course we must steer that so we may escape deserved wrath and misery, and arrive at everlasting happiness and glory.”

VI. Why was it necessary that Christ take up this office of prophet?

- A. Because we are by nature blinded by sin, Jn 12.27-40; Eph 4.17-18
- B. Because we are by nature depraved in our understanding, 1Cor 2.14; Jn 3.3-4, 9-12
- C. The light of nature is not enough to save us. The whole world is beset with darkness (Rom 1.21-23) and under the power of the evil one, 1Jn 5.19.
- D. The efficacious and saving revelation of a way of salvation by and in Christ is necessary for the elect to be brought up out of their innate blindness and be saved, Jn 6.60-65; 38-40, 41-51

Reflections

1. Christ’s abiding ministry as Prophet establishes the continual necessity of a standing ministry. Christ has gone to heaven and will remain there until the Day of Judgment. But as we stand in need of continual instruction, it pleases Him to teach and instruct us by His ministers and ambassadors. In this light, we should count it a great and invaluable privilege to be blessed with a faithful ministry of the Word.
2. If he preaches the Word of Christ faithfully, the most simple and plain preacher is to be received as the Lord’s ambassador for your good. Behind the man you must see the Saviour and from his lips you must welcome the Word of your Prophet.
3. If you feel your ignorance and desire to grow in the knowledge of God, go to your prophet Jesus. He can and will teach you. He can and will increase your understanding of the will of God. Pray to Him for understanding and then study His Word to acquire it.
4. We learn from this how we should regard our Bibles. They are the Word of Christ to us and should be read and heard with reverence, awe, and love.
5. We should be serious and diligent about being in God’s house each week to sit under the ministry of the Word, to study the catechism, and to receive the sacraments. How would it affect your Lord’s Days if you really believed that Christ were up here revealing the Word of God to you for your salvation?
6. Let Christ be your infallible Prophet. Bring all your wit and wisdom and lay them at His feet. Let His Word be the infallible plumb line and critic of your own reason and knowledge.