

## **ASCENSION: Jesus the Prophet: John 4:(1-6) 7-19**

What is Jesus Christ doing now? 3 Bible books are dedicated to what Christ is doing now: Acts, Hebrews, and Revelation. Christ is serving in his 3 offices/roles as priest, prophet, and king.

How is Christ serving in his role as prophet?

What does a prophet do?

### **Three characteristics of an Old Testament prophet:**

Prophets spoke the word of God.

This is the primary characteristic of a prophet. Israel had three offices: priests, prophets, kings. There are 17 OT prophets: Isaiah to Malachi. The prophets spoke the word of God to the kings and people. The prophets warned the kings to repent and obey God's rules - the laws of Moses. At that time the only written word of God were the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. As the OT prophets spoke the word of God it became the inspired Scripture.

My favorite OT prophet speaking the word of God to a king is Nathan and King David: **2 Samuel 12**. David would never have repented of his sin and wrote Psalm 51 without Nathan speaking God's word to him. The prophets feared God more than the kings they rebuked.

Prophets performed miraculous signs to confirm the word of God.

Not all prophets recorded miraculous signs. The most notable prophets for miraculous signs were Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah.

- God worked miraculous signs through Moses to deliver the Hebrews from Egypt and sustain them for 40 years in the desert.
- Elijah multiplied oil and flour for a poor widow of Zarephath and raised her son from the dead (1 Kings 17).
- Elijah prayed fire down from heaven in a contest with idol worshipers (1 Kings 18).
- Elisha multiplied oil for a widow so she could pay her debts.

- Elisha empowered a barren woman to conceive and give birth to a son (2 Kings 4). When the son died he raised him from death.
- He purified a poisonous stew. He made an iron axe head float.
- He healed Naaman the Syrian of leprosy (2 Kings 5).
- Isaiah prophesied the destruction of the Assyrian army and the healing of King Hezekiah's illness.

Prophets foretold the future.

Included in speaking the word of God was foretelling the future.

- Isaiah prophesied the return of Jewish exiles under a foreign king named "Cyrus" 270 years before it happened (Isaiah 45).
- Most of their future foretelling was about the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- Isaiah prophesied Christ's virgin birth (7:14).
- Micah prophesied Christ's birth in Bethlehem (5:2).
- Isaiah prophesied Christ's ministry in Galilee (9:1-2).
- Isaiah prophesied the coming of a "suffering servant" and described in detail Christ's crucifixion and resurrection (Isaiah 53).
- Jeremiah prophesied the coming of a new covenant to replace the old one (Jeremiah 31:31-37). It is a covenant with God's laws written on the hearts of people.
- Moses the prophet prophesied the coming of a greater prophet: Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. <sup>15</sup> *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—* <sup>18</sup> *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."* The greatest prophet is Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ and the three characteristics of an OT prophet:**

Jesus in his role as prophet spoke the word of God.

This includes all of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels.

- Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7 is a prime example.
- After teaching in the Jerusalem temple the people said, "This really is the Prophet" (John 7:40).

- Jesus accepted the people calling him a prophet. Jesus referred to himself as a prophet when he said to the people of his hometown Nazareth, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household” (Matthew 13:57).

Jesus in his role as prophet performed miraculous signs to confirm his identity as Moses’ greater prophet, Daniel’s “Son of Man,” and the Messiah.

- Jesus raised a widow’s son from death and the people said, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” (Luke 7:16).
- Jesus healed a man blind from birth and he said to the Pharisees who questioned him, “He is a prophet.” (John 9).
- My favorite story is from John 4. Jesus knew facts about the Samaritan woman’s past. He told the Samaritan woman she had 5 husbands and the man she was living with was not her husband. She said, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.” (John 4) Why did she say that? Because prophets know what is hidden. Jesus had a miraculous gift of knowledge. Jesus used his miraculous gift to convince her He was the Messiah. Today this is referred to as a “word of knowledge” in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Jesus also prophesied about future worship of God not being confined to a temple in Samaria or Jerusalem. (Watch this episode at *The Chosen!*)

Jesus in his role as prophet foretold the future. Read **Matthew 24:1-14**.

Most of Jesus’ prophecies recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 cover the 40 years from his ascension to heaven and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Romans. Matthew 24:32-35: <sup>32</sup> *“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup> So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>34</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”* But Jesus’ prophecies also look beyond the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the age and His glorious return.

Because Jesus’ prophecies in Matthew, Mark, and Luke deal mainly with events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70,

Jesus appeared to John while he was exiled on a island around AD 90 and revealed to John what would happen during the “church age” until He returned; that is, from AD 90 - 2020 and beyond. This is the book of Revelation. Jesus the Prophet, from his position at God’s right hand, revealed future events. Some of these events have happened over the past 2000 years and some are still in the future. *(If you want an excellent synopsis of Revelation then read or listen to my sermon “Revelation is not a Conspiracy Theory.”)*

**RIGHT NOW Jesus Christ as prophet is fulfilling everything He revealed in the book of Revelation.** Christ is the writer, director, and main actor of Revelation. He is executing judgment and preparing for his second coming.

Read **Revelation 1:9-19**.

Revelation opens with a vision of Christ exalted at God’s right hand. Then Jesus speaks to 7 churches as the Church’s true prophet (Revelation 3-4). These were 7 first-century churches in Asia Minor. (Some interpreters of Revelation believe the 7 churches represent 7 phases of the whole church age from the 1st century until Jesus returns.) Jesus speaks as a prophet to all of his churches. Jesus knows their strengths and weaknesses. Prophet Jesus has a message for every church.

I wonder what Jesus would say to FCBC.

Revelation’s prophecy has 3 sets of judgments that occur with chronological intensity. The first set is 7 seals. The second set is 7 trumpets. The third set is 7 bowls of wrath. As far as I know I’ve coined the term “chronological intensity” which means the first set is followed by the second, and the second by the third. The judgments become increasingly intense - worse! What is shocking is each series of judgments should induce repentance, but it doesn’t (7 seals: 6:15-16. 7 trumpets: 9:20-21. 7 bowls: 16:9-11).

During the time of the 7 seals and in between the seals and 7 trumpets, some events happen. It is my belief that Christ has been opening the 7 seals for the past 2000 years. The centuries in between the 7 seals and the 7 trumpets Jesus Christ gathers and seals His people during the Church

Age (R7). That's the 144,000 from every Israelite tribe and the great multitude from every nation. This is the result of the church obeying Christ's Great Commission for the past 2000 years. The mission to make disciples of all nations continues today.

It is my belief that we are moving into the 7 trumpets. We are seeing an intensification of the judgments. In between the 6th trumpet and the 7th two faithful witnesses appear and are martyred. They represent the faithful Church of Christ witnessing under persecution. (Measuring the temple of God refers to the Church which includes Jewish and Gentile believers.)

In between the 7th trumpet and the 7 plague bowls several events occur. Satan is thrown out of heaven and down to the earth and he possesses two beasts. The first beast rises out of the sea. This beast appears to be a political Antichrist. The second beast rises out of the earth and has features of a lamb and a dragon. This beast appears to be a religious antichrist who supports the political Antichrist. The religious antichrist (second beast) supports the Antichrist (first beast) with false signs. The most significant sign performed by the religious antichrist is the animation of an image of the Antichrist (13:15) and deceived people worship him. Another important thing the religious antichrist does is force everyone to be marked on the right hand or the forehead. No one can buy or sell unless he has the mark. It is the "mark of the Anitchrist beast." The mark and name of the Antichrist beast is linked to an alphanumeric code of 666 (13:18). I don't know what the mark is, but here's a truth: We are closer to the mark of the beast than we have ever been in world history. This "mark of the beast" is contrasted with the name of the Father written on the foreheads of people who belong to the true Lamb of God, Jesus Christ (14:1-5).

True believers in Jesus Christ will experience the Rapture before the 7 bowls of wrath are poured out on the world. Revelation ends with a final war, the Battle of Armageddon, the downfall of Satan, a Millennium, and an eternal new heaven and earth.

RIGHT NOW Jesus Christ as prophet is fulfilling everything He revealed in the book of Revelation whether or not we understand it. We tend to

understand it as it happens, as we look at world events and compare it with Revelation.

**Prophetic ministry of the faithful Church to culture.** I believe Jesus the Prophet commands the church to have a prophetic ministry to culture and government. The faithful prophetic Church is essential to the preservation of society and government. Faithful prophetic churches are the salt of the earth and the light of the world: **Matthew 5:13-16**. Salt is a preservative and light displaces darkness.

*Dr. Martin Luther King: "The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its **prophetic zeal**, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority."*

The church must have a prophetic ministry speaking the word of God to the culture and government like the OT prophets who spoke the word of God to Israel and the kings. For example, I admire the churches in CA telling the government they are essential! Thousands of churches signed a *Declaration of Essentiality* and opened their churches May 31 despite the governor who wanted them to remain closed. (This is like an OT prophet rebuking a king!)

Essential Point: The primary mission of the church is not social transformation or social justice. It is to spread the Gospel and make disciples of all nations. People changed by the Gospel affect social transformation and true justice.

### **Jesus Christ is YOUR true Prophet.**

- Jesus in His role as prophet speaks His word to you. Read the Bible and hear the Holy Spirit speaking through the word of God. Jesus speaks and the HS relays it to you: John 16:12-15.
- Jesus in His role as prophet will do miracles in your life. What miracle do you need - physical or financial? You can approach your Prophet's

and High Priest's throne of grace with confidence. Ask for what you need and believe He gives it to you because you are His child.

- Jesus in His role as prophet knows and controls your future. I've experienced several transitions in my life and each time I wrestled with anxiety, fear of the unknown, fear of no money and homelessness. I struggled to trust the Prophet who knows my future. But here I am and I'm blessed. Do not fear!

### **Declaration of Essentiality**

The Day of Pentecost is also known as the birthday of the Christian church. May 31, 2020 is the 1,990th anniversary of the original Day of Pentecost that occurred in the year A.D. 30. We declare that on May 31, 2020, or sooner, we will resume corporate worship as instructed in Hebrews 10:24-25.

Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Christian church and other faiths have been relegated to "nonessential" status by governing agencies throughout the United States. But we, the signers of this declaration, believe and contend that gathering together in fellowship and worship is "essential."

### **[Optional: Jesus Christ is the church's true Prophet.**

Jesus Christ in his prophetic role teaches us through the word of God. He teaches believers indirectly with the assistance of the HS and apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The ascended Christ gives gifts to mature the body of Christ, the church. The "gifts" are gifted people and spiritual gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 & Ephesians 4:7-12: *But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." ...And Christ gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.]*