

“Christ Our Prophet”
John 3:31-36
(Preached at Trinity, January 10, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verse 23** we read that while Jesus and His disciples were baptizing in the region of Judea, John the Baptist was baptizing farther to the north near Salim. People were still coming to John to be baptized, but more and more people were turning from him to Jesus.
2. John's disciples were concerned about the apparent loss of disciples by John. There is an obvious indication of envy.
John 3:26 NAU - "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."
3. John answers them with clarity and humility. He tells them two important points.
 - A. First, the shift of focus from him to Christ which they were witnessing was God's purpose. John had never expected anything more. He was merely God's herald to point to Christ.
John 3:28 NAU - "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'
John 1:23 NAS - "He said, 'I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."
 - B. Second, no man can receive more than what God has given him. If more people were coming to Christ than John it was because God was giving them to him.
John 3:27 NAU - "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven."
4. Some believe it is John the Baptist speaking to the end of the chapter. It is possible, however, and even likely, that the words of John the Baptist end with **Verse 30**. This means our text tonight are the reflections of the Apostle John.
5. John the Baptist was a great prophet sent from God. He was the last of the Old Testament prophets.
 - A. Jesus was also sent from God. In John's Gospel Jesus is recorded 23 times that He was sent from God.
John 5:23 NAU - "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."
John 17:25 NAU - "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me"
 - B. Both were sent by God – but Christ was Divine and John was a mere man. John was finite, Jesus was infinite. Jesus was Christ the Savior, John's purpose was to point to Him.
John 1:15 NAU - "John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

6. Jesus was a prophet of a particular sort. Moses spoke of Him.
Deuteronomy 18:18-19 NAS - "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ 'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him."
Acts 3:22-23 NAS - "Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. ²³ 'And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."
7. John is telling us that John the Baptist was earthly. He was born of the earth and had limited earthly knowledge. As a prophet of God his knowledge was limited. Jesus, on the other hand, came from above. Although in His incarnation He was born of an earthly woman, John's emphasis in this Gospel is the deity of Christ—that He had heavenly origins.
John 1:1 NAU - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
8. While John the Baptist's spoke prophetically according to what God revealed to him, Jesus spoke of what He knew first hand. Jesus is not just a prophet. He is *the* Prophet.
John 3:31 NAU - "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all." William Barclay – "If we want information, we have to go to the person who possesses that information. If we want information about a family, we will only get it firsthand from a member of that family. If we want information about a town, we will only get it firsthand from someone who comes from that town. So, then, if we want information about God, we will get it only from the Son of God; and if we want information about heaven and heaven's life, we will only get it from Him who comes from heaven. When Jesus speaks about God and about the heavenly things, says John, it is no carried story, no secondhand tale, no information from a secondary source. He tells us that which he himself has seen and heard. To put it very simply, because Jesus alone knows God, he alone can give us the facts about God, and these facts are the gospel."¹
9. The Jewish prophets received some measure of the Holy Spirit and spoke God's partial revelation, but Jesus received that fullness of the Holy Spirit and speaks with Gospel clarity God's full revelation.
Hebrews 1:1-3 NAS - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"
10. As our Mediator, Jesus conducts the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. Tonight, I want us to briefly consider the Prophetic office of Christ.

¹ Barclay, William, *The Gospel of John, Volume 1*, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1956), Page 136.

I. Jesus was the greatest of the prophets

A. Jesus was superior to all other prophets.

1. No one can deny, Moses was a great prophet

Deuteronomy 34:10 NAU - "Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face"

a. Moses foretold One who would be greater than himself

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 NAS - "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹

'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him."

b. The writer of Hebrews puts it well – Jesus is the Son over God's Household

Hebrews 3:5-6 NAU - "Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; ⁶ but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house-- whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end."

2. Elijah was a great prophet and was taken into heaven without experiencing death.

3. At the mount of transfiguration both Moses and Elijah were eclipsed by Jesus as God spoke from heaven:

Matthew 17:5 NAU - "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

B. Jesus is the only ultimate revealer of God

John 1:18 NAU - "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*."

Luke 10:22 NAU - "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*."

II. The Nature of Christ's Office as Prophet

Spurgeon' Catechism:

Q. How does Jesus Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by His Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

A. Christ, as our Prophet opens the eyes of our spiritual understanding

1. Without Christ we are characterized by darkness – in fact the Bible states that we ARE darkness, we are IN darkness, we are under the power of darkness

2. We are void of spiritual understanding

John 8:43 NAU - "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is because you cannot hear My word.*"

a. This is why Jesus told Nicodemus, "You must be born again."

b. This is also why men will not hear Him

John 3:32 NAU - "no one receives His testimony."

3. As our Prophet Jesus must open our understanding. He must remove the scales from our eyes

- B. As our Great Prophet He reveals the will of the Father unto us
John 15:15 NAU - "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."
1. How does Christ do this today?
 He reveals to us the will of God by His Word
 What are the words of Christ? (The Scriptures)
 2. He reveals to us the will of God by His Spirit
John 14:25-26 NAU - "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶ "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."
- C. Christ graciously and lovingly reveals to us the secret things of God
1. He has revealed His secrets
Matthew 13:10-11 NAU - "And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."
 2. Paul spoke of this truth
1 Corinthians 2:14-16 NAS - "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶ For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

III. What is our necessary response to this Prophet

- A. We must hear Him
Acts 3:22-23 NAS - "Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. ²³ 'And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."
John 3:36 NAU - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
1. Jesus spoke with absolute authority
Matthew 5:21-22 NAS - "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' ²² "But I say to you"
Matthew 7:28-8:1 NAS - "The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; ²⁹ for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes. "
 2. The Father validated Christ's authority
Matthew 17:5 NAU - "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"
KJV – "Hear ye Him."

3. Jesus speaks with Divine authority
This is the great tragedy of **Verse 32** – “and no one receives His testimony.”
Barclay adds: “To listen to Jesus is to listen to the very voice of God.”²

- B. Christ our Prophet must be heard and obeyed
John 8:31-32 NAU - "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
Matthew 7:24-27 NAU - "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell-- and great was its fall."
1. The word translated “acts upon” is ποιέω – it is a common word that simply means “to do.” It is in the present tense which implied continuing action.
2. As disciples of Christ we must continue to prosper under His teaching
Sitting at the feet of Christ is our chief and best occupation.
See Mary and Martha - **Luke 10:38-42**
Luke 10:38-42 NAU - "Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up *to Him* and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Conclusion:

1. We must receive Christ in the fulness of His person – both human and divine. We must receive Him in the fulness of His work – He is Prophet, Priest, and King.
Children’s Catechism:
Q. Why do you need Christ as a Prophet?
A. Because I am ignorant.
2. As our great Prophet we must learn of Christ. We must hear His words and obey them. May we rest dependent upon Christ for our instruction, guidance, and light.
3. Next time we will see the final and great tragedy of those who will not receive Christ—the tragedy of unbelief.
John 3:32 NAU - "What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony."
John 3:36 NAU - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

² Barclay, William, *The Gospel of John, Volume 1*, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1956), Page 137.