



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 6.7.1.2 – The Doctrine of Jesus, Son of God, Messiah (Christology)

Jesus as Our Prophet Today

During His days on earth Jesus chose first twelve, then seventy, assistants to bring His message to the children of Israel. Jesus' directives to the twelve are recorded in Matthew 10:5-42. Notice that He restricted their preaching **"to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"** (Matthew 10:6). The Gospel of Luke records Jesus' instructions to the seventy in Luke 10:1-16, concluding with this assurance: **"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me"** (Luke 10:16). The word spoken by those who faithfully speak in Jesus' name is just as much the Word of God as any word spoken by Jesus Himself; therefore, the Father's command to listen to His Son: **"Hear Him"** (Matthew 17:5), applies equally to the messengers He sends out who speak faithfully in His name.

This is the way the work of Jesus as a Prophet continues today. It continues through those who faithfully preach His Word. Before His ascension to heaven Jesus instructed His disciples: **"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"** (Matthew 28:19-20). **"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"** (Mark 16:15-16). **"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things"** (Luke 24:47-48). **"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. Receive the Holy Spirit"** (John 20:21-22). **"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"** (Acts 1:8).

The result was that **"they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them"** (Mark 16:20). The book of Acts gives us a record of some of their mission activities, centering on the work of the apostles Peter and Paul and the deacons Stephen and Philip. When Acts begins, the Holy Spirit is empowering the 120 disciples to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection in Jerusalem. When we get to the last chapter in Acts, we read how the Gospel of Christ is being proclaimed in the center of the Gentile world at that time, the city of Rome, by the apostle Paul, who was **"preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him"** (Acts 28:31).

The spread of the Gospel throughout the world was foretold by the Old Testament prophets. The prophet Isaiah exclaimed: **"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation... The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God"** (Isaiah 52:7-10). God promised through Jeremiah: **"I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding"** (Jeremiah 3:15).

Our ascended Lord has supplied shepherds (pastors) for His people. These pastors lead the way in bringing the Gospel to the world. But the work of Jesus our Prophet is not done only by those especially called be pastors and evangelists. The apostle Peter was speaking to all the Christians in his care when he said: **"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that**

you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. ... You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Every Christian has been called out of darkness into the marvelous light of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. Therefore, every Christian in his or her own way can and will proclaim the praises of our Lord and Savior.

But it is also true that our Lord supplies His believing people on earth with persons with special gifts and abilities to take the lead and assist others in bringing the good news of Jesus to the world. The apostle Paul told the Christians in Corinth: **“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues”** (1 Corinthians 12:27-28). Paul wrote to the believers in Ephesus: **“To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’ ... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”** (Ephesians 4:7-12).

The main purpose of Christ as our Prophet is to convert unbelievers and enlighten those who have been already converted, so that they may be instruments in the conversion of others. When Jesus, our risen Lord, appeared to the Pharisee Saul on the road to Damascus, He told Saul (Paul) clearly what He wanted him to do: **“I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me”** (Acts 26:16-18).

Since it is by faith in Jesus Christ that we receive forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life, and since faith is created by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, our Prophet Jesus has this one goal in mind: the preaching of the Gospel. This includes all the various ways the Gospel can be proclaimed: by the written Word, by the preached Word, by friendly conversations, by the training of our children, on the radio, television, and the Internet, by the faithful use of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, by the use of the keys to forgive and retain sins. Yes, God’s law must be proclaimed also as a preparation for the Gospel – especially in our age that has so little regard for higher authority. But the aim is always to bring about faith in Christ through the Gospel, for only the person who trusts in the Gospel of Christ will be saved.

Note what Paul wrote to the Ephesians about how they became believers in Jesus: **“In Him (Jesus) you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory”** (Ephesians 1:13-14).

All people in the world need to hear the voice of their Prophet and Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Jesus said: **“The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live”** (John 5:25). Jesus said: **“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”** (John 8:12). **“If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death”** (John 8:51). The voice of the Shepherd needs to be heard! As Jesus said: **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life”** (John 10:27-28).

What a privilege it is for us sinners to be given a role in the work of our great Prophet, Jesus Christ. We can speak His Word, and the Holy Spirit can use the Word of God we speak to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin so that they also may enjoy eternal life. What greater work can there be in this world than to be a spokesman for Christ in the work of saving sinners!

Those who reject God's Prophet Jesus by rejecting what we or others speak in His name have no other hope for salvation. When Moses foretold the coming of the great Prophet, he warned: **"It shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him"** (Deuteronomy 18:19). Jesus repeated this warning: **"He who believes in Him (Jesus) is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18). **"He who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life"** (1 John 5:10-12). The rejection of God's Prophet Jesus has eternal consequences.

Questions

1. To whom did Jesus send His twelve and the seventy?
2. To whom does Jesus send His disciples today?
3. What does the book of Acts tell us about Jesus' work as a Prophet in the days after His ascension?
4. Who is carrying on the work of Jesus as a Prophet right now?
5. Who is called on to proclaim the praises of our Savior?
6. What special gifts has our ascended Lord given to His believers to lead and assist them in their work?
7. What is the main purpose and aim of Jesus in His work as Prophet now?
8. How does Jesus carry out His work in our midst?
9. Why does everyone need to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd?
10. What is the destiny of those who reject the voice of Jesus?
11. In what way can you participate in the work of the Prophet Jesus?
12. Why is this work so important?
13. How can you become a better participant in this work?