

The Advent of the Final Prophet

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – the advent of the Son of God, entering his world to be the Final Prophet
2. aim – to cause us to hear the word of God from Jesus, the ultimate revelation of God in flesh
3. passage – Hebrews 3:1-6 (with Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and Hebrew 1:1-3a)

b. outline

1. The Place of the Prophet (Hebrews 3:1-6)
2. The Promise of the Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)
3. The Parallels of the Prophet (Hebrews 1:1-3a)

c. opening

1. the **reason** for this change of focus
 - a. **2017 was a tumultuous year**, and I preached on both the first and (now) last Sundays of the year
 - b. we are focusing on Jesus as the center of our unity (**Eph. 4:15f**), so that is our vision for 2018
2. the **method** in our change of focus
 - a. we will explore the three (3) main *roles* of Jesus (**i.e.** within redemptive history) as he comes into time and space (**i.e.** his Advent) – what has the eternal Son of God come to do?
 1. he has come to be the **King of Kings**: fulfilling a royal role, in a way that David was unable to do – Jesus *perfects* the role of the King in taking authority over all things
 2. he has come in the role of a **Great High Priest**, fulfilling a priestly role, in a way that the Levites were unable to do – Jesus *perfects* the role of High Priest in accomplishing a perfect atonement
 3. (**now**) he has come in the role of a **Final Prophet**, fulfilling a prophetic role, in a way that the O.T. prophets were unable to do – Jesus *perfects* the role of Prophet (**as we will see**)
 4. we are connecting an *explanatory* passage of the N.T. to a *prophetic* passage of the O.T.
 - a. we connected the genealogy of Jesus to the life and promises of David
 - b. we connected the picture of Jesus as a priest to the symbolism of Melchizedek
 - c. we will do the same here, connecting a role of Jesus to his O.T. counterpart

I. The Place of the Prophet (Hebrews 3:1-6)

Content

a. the details of this role of prophet (minimally!)

1. Hebrews is written to Jewish Christians who were struggling:
 - a. physically (being persecuted) and spiritually (integrating their Jewish worldview into their faith)
 - b. the letter is designed to help them not to “*neglect such a great salvation*” (**2:3**)
2. *another* reason to remain faithful to Jesus is that he is “*faithful to him who appointed him*” (**3:2**)
 - a. **i.e.** he accomplishes *all* of what his Father sent him to do (**even beyond the atonement**)
 - b. **note**: the writer of Hebrews calls Jesus an “*apostle*” (**3:1**)
 1. one of the few places where this word is applied specifically to Jesus (**John 13:16**)
“Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger [apostle] greater than the one who sent him.”
 2. apostle = someone sent on a mission; an ambassador of the gospel; lit. a messenger
 - a. normally, the word is used in the N.T. to describe the 12/13 men commissioned by Jesus
 1. sent (specifically) to deliver the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ – the **Apostolic Faith** = the words of Jesus interpreted and applied to the world by his messengers
 2. **e.g.** writing Scripture, establishing church doctrine, calling for faith in Christ, etc.
 - b. here, the writer applies the word to Jesus to speak of him as “one with a message”
 - c. **IOW**: the term “*apostle*” is synonymous with the concept of “prophet” (in this context)
 1. Paul connects the two terms together in **Eph. 4:11** – men who come with a *message* designed to unite people together in a common doctrine under a common Lord
 2. the idea of someone “*testifying*” to “*things that were to be spoken later*” (**v. 5**) points to the coming of a messenger of the type seen of old (**i.e.** an uber-prophet; **see below**)
 3. the point of chapter 3 is found in **v. 15**: if you “*hear his voice*” do not fall away
- c. so, it is in the **Incarnation** (**i.e.** the entry of the Son of God into the human condition) that Jesus comes qualified to speak *as a prophet* on behalf of the One who sent him

b. the center of this role of prophet (other than Jesus!)

1. the center of this reality (**here**) is **Moses** – how Jesus is related to *him*, specifically
 - a. Moses is mentioned in eleven (11) verses of this book – in a number of different ways
 - b. but, when most people consider Moses, they see him *primarily* as the “cultural icon” of Israel
 1. **i.e.** the one who created the civil and ceremonial culture of the nation; the one who established Israel as a *specific* people under God through the various aspects of the law (uniqueness)
 2. the “law of Moses” is the *standard* reference to him – the Lawgiver of Israel
 - c. however, upon closer examination, the *real* work of Moses was simply to deliver a message – he really didn’t “establish” anything, he simply brought the message of God to the people (**see below**)

c. the purpose of this role as prophet

1. the writer of Hebrews perceives Jesus to be a *prophet* – not an ordinary messenger, but the *Son of God* (**see v. 5**) sent *in the manner of Moses* to deliver a message from God
2. **Jesus is born to take on a prophet’s heritage, and possesses the pedigree (in his human state) to serve as a prophet; to faithfully deliver a message from God to his people**

II. The Promise of the Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

Content

a. the role of Moses as prophet of Israel

1. the messages delivered by Moses to the people of Israel:
 - a. the *name* of God – as seen in the Burning Bush incident (Exo. 3:13-15)
 - b. the *moral* nature of God – as seen in the Decalogue (**Exo. 20:1-17; note vv. 18f**)
“Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, ‘You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.’”
 - c. the *structure* of Israel under God – as seen in the civil aspects of the law
 - d. the *worship* of God – as seen in the ceremonial aspects of the law
 - e. the *expectations* by God – regarding holiness and separateness (**Lev. 11:44**)
“For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.”
 - f. the *promises* of God – regarding their future in the land and his protection of them against enemies
 - g. the *warnings* from God – regarding their destruction for failing to remain faithful to him
2. Moses could be considered the *greatest* prophet of Israel – although Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Elijah delivered a message, it could be argued that *Moses* talked more with God and delivered far more *substance* from the mouth of God than any (other than Christ) that would come after him

b. the promise to Moses as prophet of Israel (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

1. **promise:** that God would raise up *another prophet* to come “*like*” Moses – to bring the fullness of God’s message to his people
 - a. God *agrees* (**v. 16**) that the fear of the people in **Exo. 20:18f** (**see above**) was *justified*
 - b. God *knows* that those who hear his voice (directly) will be obliterated by his holiness
 - c. God (previously) *sent* men like Moses to be an intermediary between God’s word and the people
 - d. God (now) sends *the ultimate prophet* who speaks “*my words*” (**i.e.** directly; **v. 18**)
 - e. **IOW:** the implication of these verses is a *perfect* intermediary (apostle or prophet) – one who comes *as human* (**i.e.** “*from among you*”), but bearing *in himself* the fullness of deity in order to speak directly *as God* to the people (**i.e.** with “*my words in his mouth*”)

c. the role of Jesus as prophet

1. **Jesus is born to fulfill a prophetic role established in Moses by taking that role for himself, assuming the position as one who would speak for God in every way**
 - a. but, the importance of this promise reflects Christ’s perfect **fulfillment** of the prophetic office

III. The Parallels of the Prophet (Hebrews 1:1-3a)

Content

a. the foreshadowing of Jesus in Moses and the prophets

1. the prophets only spoke as “thus saith the Lord” – they could only speak *indirectly* for God
 - a. Jesus comes as the fullness of deity, bringing the *ipsissima vox* (the very voice) of God (**1:2a**)
2. the prophets had a limited view of the nature of God himself – they spoke only *haltingly* of him
 - a. **e.g.** what was Isaiah’s view of the nature of God *prior* to his vision of **Isaiah 6**?
 - b. Jesus comes as the Son bearing *in himself* the fullness of God’s nature to be revealed (**1:3a**)
3. the prophets had a limited view of the purposes of God – they often spoke in *symbolisms*
 - a. **e.g.** what exactly does Ezekiel see and do in the valley of dry bones in **Ezekiel 37**?
 - b. Jesus comes as the concrete reality of all that God is accomplishing in creation (**1:2b**)

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4. the prophets had a limited ability to affect people – they were often **failures** with their messages
 - a. Jesus comes to speak in a way that *actually affects* people – his word is *efficacious* (1:3c)
5. **Jesus is born to be the Final Prophet, fulfilling all of the typology of Moses**
 - a. **principle: our unity in Christ centers around his perfect message as the ultimate prophet of God – his voice has united us all together in one Gospel (Hebrew 12:21-25)**

"Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven."
 - b. **Jesus perfectly fulfills the roles of prophet, priest, and king; thus, our vision is to see him as the absolute object of our affections as we enter into a new year**