

Christology Week 9

Prophet, Priest, and King

No one in the OT ever held all three positions.

(From Matt Slick at Carm)

Christ as Prophet

A prophet of God is someone who reveals God, speaks for God, and communicates to people the truths that God wants them to know. Undoubtedly, Jesus did this when he came to do the will of the Father (Luke 22:42), to reveal the Father (Matt. 11:27), and to speak the things of the Father (John 8:28; 12:49).

In the Old Testament Moses said in Deut. 18:15, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." This prophecy is quoted by Peter in Acts 3:22-23 in reference to Jesus, "*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.'*" The context of Acts 3:15-22 makes clear that Peter was speaking of Jesus.

Jesus refers to himself as a prophet.

Luke 13:31-33 -- "Just at that time some Pharisees came up, saying to Him, "Go away and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You." And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.' Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem."

Matt. 13:57 -- "And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his own household.' 58 And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.."

Christ as Priest

The priests were the ones in the Old Testament who offered sacrifices to God in order to cleanse sin. Ultimately, all such priests were representations of Jesus who is the True Priest who offered himself as a sacrifice (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:26-27; 10:12), by which he cleanses us of our sin (1 John 1:7).

But, Jesus is called a priest after the order of Melchizedek. “Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek,” (Heb. 6:20).

Hebrews 3:1 – “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;”

Heb. 9:11 says, “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.”

As a priest, Jesus is our mediator between God and ourselves – “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,” (1 Tim. 2:5).

It could be said that both the Prophet and the priest stand between God and man. In the case of the prophet, he delivers the word of God, from the top down. In the case of the priest, he delivers the sacrifices of people to God, from bottom to top. So, Jesus is a prophet who delivers the word of God to us and he is also the priest who delivers his sacrifice, on our behalf, to God the father.

Christ as King

A king is someone who has authority to rule and reign over a group of people. Jesus is just such a king. He is called the King of the Jews by the Magi (Matt. 2:2), and Jesus accepts that title in Matt. 27:11, “Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' And Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say.'”

Matt. 21:5 speaks of Jesus and says, "Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey." Remember, Jesus is King in that he rules and judges. "And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war," (Rev. 19:11). The armies follow him (Rev. 19:14).

The phrase, "Kingdom of God," occurs 66 times in the NASB, most of them in the synoptic gospels. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel," (Mark 1:14). Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," (Matt. 6:10). Is there a kingdom of God without a King?

The persecution and humiliation of Jesus

Jesus was persecuted because:

- He was sinless. His presence in the sinful world served to judge them (John 1:5)
- He was persecuted by the Jews for interacting with sinners (Luke 15:2).
- He was hated and judged by the Pharisees and Jewish leaders because He held them guilty (Matt. 23:13-36).
- He physically suffered at the hands of Roman soldiers because He undermined the concept of Caesar worship. (Matt. 22:15-22, John 19:15)

But, this was all according to God's plan and it served to fulfill the Scriptures that prophesied His suffering (such as Isaiah 53)

Heb. 5:8 - Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Christ's "humiliation" is the process by which he (though divine) came to earth as a baby, eventually to die on the cross.

Phil 2:5-8 -- Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The Death of Jesus

His death marks the fulfillment of his perfect obedience. This obedience to death is the result of his power and willingness, not the result of Satan's victory or a great cosmic injustice.

John 10:18 - "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

It is important that we recognize that His death was a willing sacrifice, in willing obedience to the command of the Father.

Mark 14:32-43 -- They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell to the ground and *began* to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will." And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. And He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the

Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!" Immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, *who were* from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Luke 22:39-47 -- And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation." While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd *came*, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him.

Although various theories and philosophies (such as Gnosticism) have argued about the extent of His death – some (like the Muslims) argue that He did not actually die, but had a substitute. Some say that as God it was impossible for Him to actually die. But, the evidence from the Bible leads to the following conclusions:

Jesus suffered the full extent of physical death, which is separation of body and soul. The earliest Christian creeds confirm this, as well. As His body lay in the tomb, He descended into the lower parts of the earth.

Matthew 12:38-42 -- Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and

will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. *The Queen of the South* will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Jesus also knew the suffering of spiritual death, which is separation from God. This appears to be what was happening when he hung on the cross, crying out, "Father, why have you forsaken me?!"

This could be the cause of the turmoil he was in the night before in the garden (even more than the physical suffering.)

Not only did He suffer physically, but He took the curse of the Law in our place, fulfilling the years of sin sacrifices that had temporarily abated the wrath of God on Israel.

Gal. 3:13-14 -- Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree [Deut. 21:23]: that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

He also subjected Himself to human authorities, allowing Himself to be arrested (re:Luke 4:28-30) and standing before the highest Roman judge in the region – Pontius Pilate.

Read John 19:1-15

He died like a criminal, hung between two guilty men. So, He died under the judgment of men and under the curse of the Law of God.

This is why the message of the cross is a scandal to the Jews because this was not the way that they perceived their Messiah's reign on Earth.

But God, in the resurrection, reverses all of this.

The Exaltation of Christ

Exaltation refers to when Christ laid aside the infirmities of the flesh and again assumed his majesty.