

How is Christ prophet, priest, and king?

Introduction:

1. There were three major, distinct offices among the people of Israel:
 - Prophet: spoke God's words to the people (such as Nathan, 2 Sam. 7:2)
 - Priest: offered sacrifice, prayers, and praises to God (such as Abiathar, 1 Sam. 30:7)
 - represented the people to God
 - King: ruled over the people as God's representative (such as King David, 2 Sam. 5:3)
2. Christ fulfills these three offices in the following ways:
 - Prophet: Christ reveals God to us and speaks God's words to us.
 - Priest: Christ both offers a sacrifice to God on our behalf and is himself the sacrifice that is offered.
 - King: Christ rules over the church and over the universe as well.

A. Christ as Prophet

1. Moses was the first major prophet, and predicted sometime another prophet like himself would come: Deut 18:15-18
2. The word "prophet" is not a primary designation of Jesus. Often those who called Jesus a "prophet" knew very little about him:
Matt 16:14; Luke 7:16; John 4:19
3. But there was an expectation that a prophet like Moses would come (Deut. 18:15-18): John 6:14; Acts 3:22-24
4. It is interesting that Jesus is never considered a prophet in the Epistles: Heb. 1:1-2; 3:1
5. Why did the New Testament epistles avoid calling Jesus a prophet?
 - a. Jesus is the one about whom the prophecies were made. Luke 24:27; also 24:25-26
 - b. Jesus was not merely a messenger of revelation from God (like all other prophets), but was himself the source of revelation from God. → Rather than, "Thus says the LORD," Jesus says, "But I say to you . . ."
(Matt. 5:22)

B. Christ as Priest

1. Jesus as priest offered a perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus' sacrifice was not the blood of animals but his own blood: Heb 10:4; 9:26; 4:14
2. Jesus as Priest Continually Brings Us Near to God
 - a. Jesus continually leads us into God's presence, so that we no longer need the Jerusalem temple: Heb 9:24
 - b. Jesus has gone into the heavenly equivalent of the holy of holies, the very presence of God. Heb 6:19-20
 - c. We have a far greater privilege than those people who lived at the time of the Old Testament temple. Heb 10:19-22
3. Jesus as Priest Continually Prays for Us. Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34
To intercede: Not merely to stand as someone's representative, but moreover, to make specific requests or petitions before someone.
In Christ, we have a true man, a perfect man, praying and thereby continually glorifying God through prayer.
Thus, human manhood is raised to a highly exalted position:
In Christ, we also have God hearing the prayers of all people simultaneously, in a way no human could possibly do.
1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.
→ therefore we should not pray to Mary, or to any other believers who have died

C. Christ as King.

1. In the Old Testament the King had authority over the nation of Israel.
2. In the New Testament Jesus was born to be King of the Jews – yet refused any attempt by people to make him an earthly king John 6:15; 18:36

3. Jesus did have a kingdom whose arrival he announced. He is in fact the true king of the new people of God.
Matt 4:17; 21:5 Luke 19:38; John 1:49
4. After his resurrection, Jesus was given by God the Father far greater authority over the church and over the universe.
Eph 1:19-22; Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor 15:25
5. Jesus will return to earth in power and great glory to reign:
Matthew 26:64; Philippians 2:10; Revelation 19:16

D. Our Roles as Prophets, Priests, and Kings

If we look a. back at the situation of Adam before the fall, and

b. forward to our future status with Christ in heaven,

we can see that these roles of prophet, priest, and king had parallels in the experience that God originally intended for man, and will be fulfilled in our lives in heaven.

1. Prior to the Fall:

Prophet: In the Garden of Eden, Adam was a prophet – in that he had true knowledge of God and always spoke truthfully about God and his creation.

Priest: Adam was a priest in that he was able freely and openly to offer prayer and praise to God. There was no need of a sacrifice – but Adam and Eve’s work would have been offered to God in gratitude and thanksgiving.

King: Adam and Eve were also “kings” (or king and queen) in a sense of having been given dominion and rule over the creation (Gen. 1:26-28).

2. After the Fall:

Prophet: Fallen humans have believed false information about God and spoke falsely about him to others.

Priest: Fallen humans no longer had priestly access to God because sin cut them off from his presence.

King: Instead of ruling over the creation as kings, fallen humans were subject to the harshness of the creation and tyrannized by flood, drought, and unproductive land, as well as by tyrannical human rules.

3. Partial Recovery in OT Israel:

There was a partial recovery of the purity of these roles in the establishment of three offices of prophet, priest, and king in the kingdom of Israel. Some godly men have occupied these offices. Yet many false prophets, dishonest priests, and ungodly kings have existed.

The original purity and holiness with which God intended man to fulfill these offices were never fully realized.

4. Full Recovery in Christ:

Prophet: The perfect prophet – who most fully declared God’s words to us.

Priest: The perfect high priest – who offered the supreme sacrifice and who brought his people near to God.

King: The true and perfect king of the universe, who will reign forever with a scepter of righteousness over the new heavens and the new earth.

5. Today – we can imitate Christ in each of these roles:

a. As prophets: We have a “prophetic” role as we proclaim the gospel to the world, and thereby bring God’s saving Word to people. In addition, we speak truthfully about God to believers and unbelievers, as fulfilling a “prophetic” function (in the broad sense of the word).

b. As priests: (1) We are a “royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9). We are invited to be built into a spiritual temple and “to be a holy priesthood” as well as “to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5)

(2) We can enter the holy of holies (Heb. 10:19,22). (3) We are able to “continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name” (Heb. 13:15). (4) Our good works are sacrifices pleasing to God (Heb.13:16). (5) We present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1)

c. As kings: We share in part now in the kingly reign of Christ, since we have been raised with him the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6).

We also share to some degree in his authority over evil spiritual forces (Eph. 6:10-11, James 4:7, 1 Pet. 5:9, 1 John 4:4)

In addition, God has now committed to us authority over various areas in his world or in the church, giving to some authority over much and to some authority over little.

When the Lord returns those who have been faithful over little will be given authority over much (Matt. 25:14-30).

6. When Christ Returns:

a. As prophets: We will once again be true "prophets" because our knowledge will then be perfect and we shall know as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12).

We will speak only truth about God and his world, and in us the original prophetic purpose which God had for Adam will be fulfilled.

b. As priests: We will be priests forever, for we will eternally worship and offer prayer to God as we behold his face and dwell in his presence. Rev. 22:3-4.

Also, we will continually offer ourselves and all that we do or have sacrifices to our most worthy king.

c. As kings: We will, in subjection to God, share in ruling over the universe: Rev. 22:5

We will also judge angels: 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rev. 3:21

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