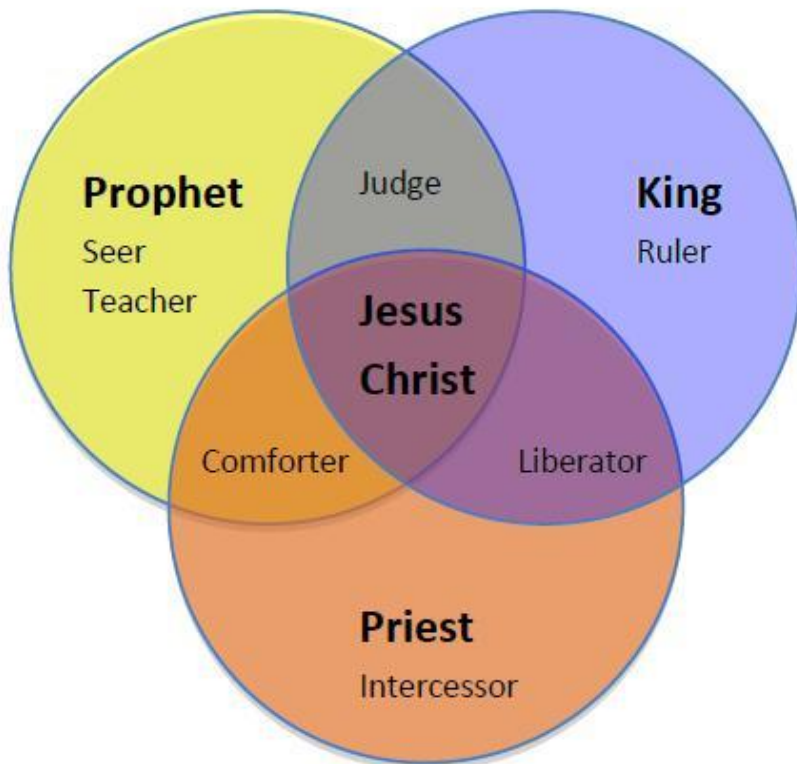


Part 4: 4 THE OFFICES OF CHRIST



Jesus Christ was Prophet, Priest and King. These were the three major offices among the people of Israel in the Old Testament. The Prophet, such as Nathan (2 Sam 7:1-2), the priest such as Abiathar (1 Sam 30:7) or the King such as David. These three offices were distinct. The prophet spoke God's work to the people, the priest offered sacrifices and interceded for them and the King ruled over them as God's representative.

A. Christ the Prophet

Moses was the first prophet and wrote the first five books of the Bible. He also predicted that Jesus would come, as reported in Acts 3:22: "For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you'" (see also Deut 18:15-18)

However, Jesus was much more than a prophet. Often those who called Jesus a prophet knew very little about Him. For instance, various opinions of Jesus were circulating: "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or *one of the prophets*" Matt 16:14. When Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain from the dead, the people were afraid and said, "*A great prophet* has arisen among us!" Lk 7:16. When Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well something of her past life, she immediately responded, "Sir, I perceive that you are *a prophet.*" Jn 4:19. But she did not know very much about him.

Nevertheless there was still an expectation that *the* prophet like Moses

would come. For instance, after Jesus had multiplied the loaves and fish some people exclaimed “This is indeed *the prophet* who is to come into the world!” Jn 6:14.

However, in the Epistles Jesus is given a much higher name than a prophet: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers *by the prophets*; but in these last days he has spoken to us *by a Son*” Heb. 1:1-2. Then after discussing the greatness of the Son in chapters 1 and 2, the author concludes this section **not** by saying: “Therefore consider Jesus, the greatest prophet of all” or something like that, but rather by saying “Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, *the apostle* and high priest of our confession” Heb 3:1.

Jesus is far greater than any of the Old Testament prophets in two ways:

1. He is the one *about whom* the prophecies in the OT were made. When Jesus spoke with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, he took them through the entire OT, showing how the prophecies pointed to him: “And beginning with Moses *and all the prophets*, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” Lk 24:27. He told these disciples that they were slow of heart to believe *all that the prophets had spoken*, showing that it was “necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory” (Lk 24:25-26 cf 1 Pet 1:11).

2. Jesus was not merely a messenger of revelation from God (like all the other prophets) but was himself the source of revelation. Rather than saying as all the Old Testament prophets did, “Thus says the Lord” Jesus could begin with the amazing statement “But I say to you” (Mat 5:22 et al). The word of the Lord came to the OT prophets but Jesus spoke on his own authority as the eternal Word of God who perfectly revealed the Father to us (Jn14:9; Heb 1:1-2).

B. Christ as priest.

Under the law of the Old Testament the priest offered sacrifices on behalf of the people and interceded for them. The theme is developed extensively in Hebrews, where Jesus functions as a priest in two ways:

1. Jesus offered a perfect sacrifice for sin. This was not the blood of animals such as bulls or goats “For it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (10:4). Instead Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice: “But as it is, He has appeared once for all at the end

of the age to put away sin *by the sacrifice of Himself*" (9:26). His was a completed and final sacrifice, never to be repeated, a theme frequently emphasised in Hebrews (7:27,12,24-28; 10:1-2,10,12,14; 13:12). He was both the sacrifice and the priest who offered the sacrifice. Jesus is now the "Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens." (4:14) and who appeared "in the presence of God on our behalf" (9:24).

2. Jesus continually brings us near to God. The priests not only offered sacrifices but also went into the presence of God on behalf of the people to lead us into God's presence. But when Jesus shouted on the cross: "It is finished!" the old covenant ended. The veil in the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn in two. We can now enter freely into God's presence through the blood of Jesus under a New Testament or Covenant!

3. Jesus as priest continually prays for us. In the OT the priests prayed on behalf of the people. Hebrews says: "He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives *to make intercession for them.*" (7:25) Romans affirms this by saying Christ Jesus is the one "*who indeed intercedes for us.*(Rom 8:34)

C. Christ as King

In the Old Testament Kings represented the rule of God and were meant to maintain that rule. In the New Testament Jesus was born to be King of the Jews (Mat 2:2), but He refused to let them make Him an earthly King with an earthly military and political power (Jn 6:15). He told Pilate: "My Kingdom is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight" Jn 18:36. Nevertheless, Jesus did have a Kingdom whose arrival He announced in His preaching (Mat 4:17,23;12:28, et al). He is in fact the true King of the new people of God. Now Jesus is king "*far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and He has put all things under His feet and has made Him head over all things for the church*" (Eph 1:20-22; Mat 28:18; 1 Cor 15:25. Moreover one day He will return in great power and glory to reign (Matt 26:64; 2 Thes 1:17; Rev 19:16). On that day He will be acknowledged as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev 19:16) and every knee shall bow to Him (Phil 2:10)

D. Our role as Prophets, Priests and Kings.

We as Christians can begin to imitate Christ in each of these roles, though in a subordinate way. We have a “prophetic” role as we encourage one another in the meetings and proclaim the gospel to the world. In fact



whenever we speak truthfully about God to believers or unbelievers we are fulfilling a prophetic function.

We are also priests. 1 Peter 2:9 says “you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may

declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” Revelation 1:6 says: “has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” See also Heb 13:15,16; Rom 12:1.

Finally we also have a part in His Kingly reign since we have been raised with Him to sit in heavenly places (Eph 2:6), thus sharing His authority over evil spiritual forces (Eph 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; 1 Jn 4:4)

We have the prophet, priest and king living in us. He has even now committed to us authority in various areas in the church or in the world, giving to some authority over much and to others authority over little. But when the Lord returns those who have been faithful over little will be given authority over much (Matt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-26)

When Christ returns we will “reign with Him forever and ever” (Rev 22:5). Jesus says: “He who conquers, I will grant him *to sit with me on my throne*, as I myself conquered and sat down with my father on His throne” (Rev 3:21). Corinthians says: “Do you not know that *the saints will judge the world?....do you not know that we are to judge angels?*” 1 Cor 6:2-3). Therefore for all eternity, we shall forever function as subordinate prophets, priests and kings, yet always subject to the Lord Jesus, the supreme prophet, priest and king.

songs:

Crown Him with many crowns; King of Kings, majesty; No other Name;
Rejoice the Lord is King.