

Jesus Christ — Prophet, Priest, And King

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Heb. 1:1-4

Heb. 1:1-4, “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son (Prophet), whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins (Priest), sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (King): Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”*

The epistle to the Hebrews might well be called a divine commentary on the book of Leviticus, for in it the author shows that the ceremonies of the Aaronic priesthood are fully matured in Jesus Christ, the Christian’s High Priest.

The primary object of the author of this epistle was to persuade his Hebrew brethren in Christ to persevere to the end of their just-begun Christian course, and not to fall back again into Judaism. They were about to give up Christ for Moses.

There were two reasons for this:

- Many of these Christians had come out of Judaism, and we would naturally expect them to be persecuted by the leaders of Judaism.
- Furthermore, these Jewish Christians had been educated under the institutions of Moses; all of their religious habits and early impressions served to attach them to the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism.

Hence, when they were to make final choice between Christ and Moses, their resolutions were not only weakened by fear of persecution, but by their love for the ancient ceremonies and customs.

These Jewish Christians needed help and encouragement and it pleased God to send it to them through the agency of Paul, who once thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus.

Acts 26:9, *“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”*

The apostle Paul begins the epistle by showing the superiority of Christianity over the Mosaic system, and he continues to do so throughout the entire epistle.

The inspired apostle does a masterful job of presenting Jesus in the text as their Prophet, Priest, and King. This he does with the use of three verb phrases:

- *“God ... hath spoken unto us by his Son.”* — Christ is Prophet.
- *“He had by himself purged our sins.”* — Christ is Priest.
- He *“sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”* — Christ is King.

Christ is Prophet.

The meaning of “prophet”: “From ‘Prophanai’; ‘pro’, meaning ‘for’, and ‘phanai’, meaning ‘to speak’; hence, ‘to speak for’”; so a prophet is one who speaks for another.

The manner in which God communicated Himself and His will to men under the Old Covenant:

“At sundry times.”

The Old Testament revelation was given only in fragments. Moses, David, Isaiah, and others received only partial and incomplete disclosures of God’s divine will.

“And in divers manners.”

God employed various methods of communicating His will. At one time by direct communication, another time by visions.

The voice of God came to Samuel while he slept; it came to Elijah by a stormy wind which rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks; by an earthquake, by fire, and by a still small voice.

But God “hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.”

“Whom he hath appointed heir of all things.”

As God, Christ was equal with the Father. Phil. 2:6, *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”*

But as Mediator, He was appointed by the Father to be the heir of all things, the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth.

“By whom also he made the worlds.”

By Jesus, God made the worlds, both visible and invisible, the heavens and the earth.

- John 1:1-3, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”*
- Col. 1:16-17, *“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”*
- *“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”*

He is, in person, the Son of God; and as such, He must have the same nature.

- John 1:14, *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”*
- Col. 1:15, *“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”*

Eikon — image, representation, character, exact copy.

“And upholding all things by the word of his power.”

That is, by His powerful word or command.

- Psalms 33:6, *“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”*
- Psalms 33:9, *“For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”*

So, Jesus commanded the waves and the winds to be still and they obeyed; He spoke to the diseases and they departed; He spoke to the dead to arise and they arose.

Modern unbelief in its various forms denies this first declaration of Christ being our Prophet.

The modernist accepts Jesus as a great teacher, a great philosopher such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, but does not say with Nicodemus:

John 3:2, *“The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”*

Christ is Priest.

The office of a priest (under Moses’ Law) was entirely different from that of a prophet. The prophet spoke for God to the people, while the priest spoke for the people unto God.

The first two chapters of Hebrews elaborate on the author’s presentation of Jesus as the great Prophet; but the next eight chapters present Christ as the Christian’s High Priest.

He is *“the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.”* Heb. 3:1, *“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;”*

He is a High Priest who understands both man and God. Heb. 4:14-16, *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

He is a High Priest *“after the order of Melchisedec.”* Heb. 7:1-17, *“For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. If therefore perfection*

were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

He is our High Priest to help in every time of need. Heb. 7:25, “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

He is a High Priest by whose blood we are sanctified and have obtained eternal redemption. Heb. 9:11-12, “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

Modern unbelief in its various forms denies this second declaration that Christ is our Priest. The modernist denies that Jesus Christ is the Christian’s High Priest.

He is willing to place Jesus in the hall of fame along with Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet, and other worldly religionists. But when mention is made of Christ’s becoming our High Priest through His suffering and death on the cross, the modernist begins to sneer.

1 Cor. 1:17, “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

Christ is King.

This is neither the function of a prophet nor a priest.

When did Jesus sit down on the right hand of God? Following His resurrection when He ascended back to heaven to the Father’s right hand.

- Mark 16:19, “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.”
- Eph. 1:19-23, “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Jesus will continue to have “*all authority ... in heaven and on earth,*” until He comes again. 1 Cor. 15:24-26, “*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*”

Some deny this third declaration of our text; they deny that Christ is reigning now as “*King of kings.*”

On the Pentecost when the church of our Lord was established, the inspired apostle Peter declared that God had raised up Christ “*to sit on his throne.*” Acts 2:30, “*Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;*”

Thus it follows that if He is not sitting there now, He has not been raised from the dead; and if He has not been raised from the dead, our preaching is vain.

1 Cor. 15:12-17, “*Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*”

Reigning now at God’s right hand, He will continue to reign until the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.

- 1 Cor. 15:24-26, “*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*”

- Rev. 20:12-14, *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”*

Conclusion.

Truly, Jesus Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King; but, what if we reject Him?

If we will not hear the Prophet, then *“To whom shall we go?”* John 6:68, *“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

If we will not accept the sacrifice of this High Priest, wherewith shall we be cleansed from our sins? Heb. 10:26, *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,”*

If we repudiate the authority of the King of kings, who shall help in our hour of death?

- John 14:6, *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*
- Heb. 2:3, *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him,”*

There is no escape; there is no other way of salvation, and the neglect of this will be followed by certain destruction.

