

THE224 Christian Narrative 2 Redemption

Unit 2c The Offices of Christ

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Welcome to Session 2C of Christian Narrative 2. Today we're going to look at the offices of Christ. Our main teaching point is that Jesus Christ fills three theologically significant offices: the office of prophet, priest, and king. And so what we're going to do throughout this session is look at each one of these individually and ask the question, "What does it mean that Jesus is a prophet, priest, and king? How did he function as prophet, priest, and king? And then what impact does that have with us?" In other words, what aspect of those offices do we share as his followers?

First, let's take a look at Jesus as prophet. As prophet, primarily Jesus reveals God. And we see this in the fact that he proclaimed the coming of the gospel with all authority. I want to read to you a rather lengthy section from Luke 4, starting in verse 16 and running through verse 30, because this I think is a great description of Jesus functioning as a prophet. It says there, "He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' And he said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.' And he said, 'Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.' When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, he went away."

Here's a great passage that talks about how Jesus came to proclaim the gospel, and he did so with all authority. This was his role and function as prophet. So let's take a look at Jesus as the prophet. What do we see here, and what do we need to understand? Well, first of all, let's see that Moses predicted that God would in fact raise up a prophet like himself. In Deuteronomy 18, we read in verses 15 through 18, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' And the Lord said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.'"

So there was a general understanding that a prophet like Moses would arise. And Jesus, in many ways, is functioning like that prophet. And so, as we begin to look through his ministry, we see that people who saw the work of Jesus rightly called him a prophet. We see a variety of passages that are talking about Jesus in this way. We look at Luke 9:8. "Some thought Elijah had appeared, and others thought that a prophet of old had risen," speaking of Jesus. Matthew 16:14, Jesus calls them an evil and adulterous

generation seeking for a sign, but he decided he wouldn't give them a sign, except for the sign of Jonah, so he left and departed. John 6:14, "When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!'" John 9:17, "So they asked the blind man again, 'What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?' And he said, 'He is a prophet.'" So the people around Jesus who were listening to him speak and watching him work very clearly saw that he was a prophet.

However, what we want to see and what Scriptures truly attests to was that Jesus was in fact greater than all the prophets that had preceded him, that he was greater than Moses, that he was greater than Elijah. He is unique. Hebrews 1:1-3 talk about this. "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. Thus, after making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Jesus is so much greater than all of the other prophets. In fact, we want to note that Jesus isn't actually called a prophet or the prophet. He is the Son of God. And so we've got to be careful here when we look at this.

So he is the one of whom the prophets spoke of, one of the things that Scriptures points us out. So we read in Luke 24:27, "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." On Emmaus Road, Jesus speaks to those disciples he was walking with. He says, "Look. All of the prophets were speaking of me." 1 Peter 1:10-11, "Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and his subsequent glories." Okay, so again, the prophets of old sought through God to understand when Jesus would come. And so what we see is that Jesus is greater than all the prophets before him because he's the one that they were pointing to. And furthermore, we see that Jesus was not just the messenger of God but actually the source of revelation from God. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Completely unique. No other prophet was God. They spoke on behalf of God. Jesus was unique in this role. Also in John 14:9, Jesus said to them, "Have you been with me so long that you do not know me?" speaking with Philip. "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you ask to be shown the Father?" So Jesus is saying, "Look. I am greater than the prophets that have come before me."

So now that we understand a little bit about Jesus' office as prophet, the question we want to ask is how do we relate to Jesus as prophet? We relate to Jesus as prophet in that we share in the proclamation of the gospel. Like he came to proclaim the good news, so we too do the same thing. Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Also, Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Jesus as a prophet came to preach the good news. We share in that role by proclaiming the good news with him.

Let's take a look at Jesus as priest. As priest, Jesus cares for our sins and mediates on our behalf. So Jesus offered a perfect sacrifice for our sins that we find in Hebrews 9:26 and 10:4, but also presents us perfect and without blemish to God. So when we go back into those Scriptures, here's Hebrews 9:26.

He did not “suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Because “it is impossible (Hebrews 10:4) for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” So Jesus did, in fact, offer perfect sacrifice for our sin, which was himself. He was our redemption, our atonement. But then consequently, as priest, he’s also able to present as perfect and without blemish before God. Ephesians 5:27, “So that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” He cares for our sins and mediates on our behalf.

So let’s understand this role of priest a little bit more in detail. First, Jesus is the great high priest who pleads our case before God. So he leads us to God and he intercedes on our behalf. Related to this first point of leading us to God, Hebrews 4:14 says, “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.” Chapter 6 verses 19 to 20 of Hebrews as well, “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” And Hebrews 9:24, “For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.” So he creates the opportunity for us to be led into the presence of God.

And he also intercedes on our behalf. Hebrews 7:25, “He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” Romans 8:34, “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” We read also in 1 Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” So Jesus is the great high priest who pleads our case before God, leading us to God and interceding on our behalf. Now, Jesus also ushers us into the presence of God. Hebrews 10:19-22. And if you haven’t figured this out, I mean, the Book of Hebrews really talks about the role of Jesus as priest so, so very well. So if you want to understand this one more, you really should just spend some time reading the Book of Hebrews.

But there, Hebrews 10:19-22. “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Jesus brings us into the presence of God and we can stand confidently before him. And so we see that we do not need to fear. Jesus truly is our mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). We already read it, but recognize this is the role that Jesus fills as our priest. He stands on our behalf. He makes us clean and he brings us into the presence of God.

So how do we relate to Jesus as priest? We relate to Jesus as priest, and we are also called to be both priests and living sacrifices. 1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” In all three of these roles (prophet, priest, and king), we see that there is an aspect of this particular role related to the coming kingdom of God, that we as fellow prophets, priests, and those who reign with Christ (we’ll talk about that next), we really see that our job is to advance the kingdom of God. This is why Christ has come. He’s come to bring the kingdom, and we are helping actualize that kingdom in our world. Romans 12:1, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by

the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." We become a living sacrifice. Christ was the sacrifice who died, but then rose again. So he is too a living sacrifice in some of the same ways that we are. We are called to lay down our life in order to serve Jesus Christ who has redeemed us. Jesus is our priest.

So let's now turn our attention to Jesus as king. As king, Jesus really is our sole authority for life in the church age. And that is, he is bringing about perfect peace and justice to this earth. And so we are challenged in 1 Timothy 6:15 to hold on to the teachings and commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ because he is returning and he is sovereign, "the King of kings and Lord of lords." Also, in Revelation 19:16, we read that "On his robe (at his return) and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." Jesus truly is our king. Let's try and understand this concept of Jesus as king. What does this office truly mean?

The first thing that we want to see about Jesus is that he actually preached about his kingdom. He talked much about what he was doing. In Matthew 4, we see Jesus going out and preaching. And there in verse 17, he says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Verse 23, he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming that the gospel of the kingdom had come, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. In Matthew 12:28, we read that Jesus talks about the fact that it is because he is casting out demons that "the kingdom of God has come upon you," speaking to his followers, his audience. So Jesus really had this idea, this concept of the kingdom that was to come. In fact, he recruited his disciples to follow him and help build the kingdom.

Not only this, but Jesus was also, in fact, declared king by his followers. They said in Luke 19:38, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" So he preaches the kingdom, he displays works of power that talk about the presence of the kingdom, and his followers declare him to be king. Now, when we move further on, we see that Jesus is actually given absolute authority by the heavenly Father. God the Father gives Jesus all authority. And this is testified to in several passages in Scriptures. Ephesians 1:20-22, "He worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places." That place is "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but the age to come. And God has put all things under his feet and given him as head over all things to the church." Matthew 28:18, Jesus said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." 1 Corinthians 15:25, Jesus "must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet." Jesus has been given absolute authority by the heavenly Father, and we have to see this. He is functioning as a king.

Furthermore, we see that Jesus has authority which will be clearly recognized on his return. So there's an aspect to the kingdom of Jesus, to this office of king where we experience it now in a limited way, but later on we will also experience it in a fuller way. So we read Matthew 26:64. "I tell you that from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." He speaks of himself in the future there. 2 Thessalonians 1, "When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, he will inflict vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because of our testimony to you who have believed." So 2 Thessalonians 1, wow, do we see a picture of

the beauty and the power of Christ. I mean, actually, in the right sense, some of the fear that we should have of his authority and power because he will come with vengeance and judge those who have not obeyed his commands.

Revelation 19:11-16, “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.” Again, another picture of the power and majesty and absolute authority of God given to Jesus because he will come and judge the world. Succinctly put in Philippians 2:10, “At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” Jesus has authority which will be clearly recognized on his return.

So how do we relate to all of that? Well, in a very limited sense, what we do in relationship to Jesus as king is that we help prepare the kingdom. We do this by submitting to his authority and by reigning with him. 2 Corinthians 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God is making his appeal through us. And we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” As I said a little bit ago, prophet, priest, and king all have roles in bringing the kingdom. And so, because we share in a limited sense each one of these roles, we have an obligation to bring the kingdom of God to earth, to communicate to people that this kingdom is here. We’re ambassadors. We’re fellow priests. We proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God as prophets as well. And so we recognize this. But we also submit to the authority of God. “Submit yourselves (James 4:7) to God therefore. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Thus, our role is to submit to the authority of God the Son in our lives. And we also reign with him. In 2 Timothy 2:12, we’re told, “If we endure to the end, we will reign with him; if we deny him, he will deny us.” There’s this idea that as king, we relate to Jesus by becoming his ambassadors, by submitting to his authority, and by seeking to reign with him as he brings in his new kingdom.

So Jesus fills three theologically significant offices. Jesus is the prophet. He functions as the prophet. He functions as the priest, the great high priest. He functions as the king. And in each one of these roles, we recognize a new aspect of who Christ is, and we are called to follow him in that office as well. Jesus, unlike anyone we’ve ever met, fully Lord, fully God, and functioning in every way to make our lives redeemed lives and lives that bring the kingdom to earth.