

Christ - Our Priest

We started looking last week on the relation that Christ has with us and started with His role as a prophet. Learning about Christ is so rich because there are multiple ways in which He relates to us. There are so many ways that we react and relate with each other and this no less true when we connect with Christ. This is not the case when it comes to other religions.

For example, the Koran portrays Allah as one dimensional. He is ultimately transcendent and never described in personal, relational, or incarnational terms like in Christianity. The Bible, especially in the New Testament, presents God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, making Him more relational and multidimensional. As we reflect on the Lord's model prayer, we make holy His name. When you meditate on the names used for God in the Bible, they are all reflective of His relationship with us and the dimensions of His character. In Islam, Allah is seen as sovereign and distant. While Muslims are called to submit, the idea of a personal relationship with Allah is not foreign.

The Bible contains various literary genres: poetry, historical narratives, wisdom literature, and prophecy. The Koran is primarily didactic, using direct commandments, warnings, and doctrinal proclamations. It lacks narrative development and personal interactions with God like those found in the Bible. The Bible describes God expressing joy, sorrow, love, and even grief. Allah in the Koran is primarily depicted through His will and commands. His emotions are not deeply explored as personal experiences.

In Christianity, Jesus is the fullest revelation of God (John 1:14, Colossians 1:15), making God's character more tangible. The ultimate revelation is not a person in Islam, it is a book of commands. In Islam, submission to the Koran's teachings defines faith. In Christianity, faith is about knowing and trusting Jesus. The Bible presents God as

entering into covenants and interacting with His people throughout history. In Islam, Allah gives laws and guidance but does not enter into binding relational agreements with people.

Things are not any better in Eastern religions. Hinduism presents the gods as capricious and in need of appeasement in order to grant favors. Buddhism is more of a self-help religion.

As we look to the Bible to learn about Jesus, we are interested in how He relates to us in a multi-dimensional way. The Bible is written in an intricately woven way so that there are multiple ways to understand God. The several sermons we are looking at now are based on the prophecies about Christ corresponding to the leadership roles in Israel. The fulfillment of Moses' prophecy about Christ as prophet was abundantly fulfilled when He came to earth calling mankind to repentance. Now we are going to look at Him in a different light as our priest.

1. The mediatorial work of the priests -

Where the work of a prophet was give a message of judgment and hope, the work of the priest was different. Priests were mediators. They stood between men *and* God to reconcile man *to* God. On man's behalf, their work of making sacrifice to God for Israel satisfied God's judgment against man. On God's behalf, the priest brought righteousness to man. There was actually an insufficiency on the part of the priests we will look at in a little while, but this was the character of their work.

- They taught the Law

One of the things many people don't realize about priests was that part of their work was to teach about the Law. If they had heard the message of the prophet and repented, the priest would make sacrifice which represented their salvation, and then teach them the law for their sanctification.

Lev 10:11 And that ye [priests]

may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

Deu 33:10 They [**the priests**] shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.

We can see the priests work of Ezra and his priests taught the people coming back from the captivity. They taught them the Law to strengthen and fortify their spiritual foundation.

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. The people all *stood* together as they went through the hours of teaching.

Neh 8:1-8 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

...

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

- They offered sacrifices

Lev 16:29-34 And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

30 For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

31 It *shall be* a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

32 And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments:

...

34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

- They *were* a sacrifice

According to the Law, all firstborn were designated for destruction. However, human sacrifice was forbidden, so the Law of Redemption was established.

Num 18:15-17 Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, *whether it be* of **men** or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.
16 And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* twenty gerahs.

17But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they *are* holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat *for* an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

In Israel, the Tribe of Levi was taken for the redemption of all Israel. They *were* the redemption price.

Num 3:5-13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
6Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

...[God gave Aaron and the Levites charge of the Temple]

11And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

12And I, behold, **I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;**

13**Because all the firstborn *are* mine; *for* on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I *am* the LORD.**

2. Jesus as a priest -

- He taught the people

Across the Gospels, people were amazed by Jesus' teaching because He taught with authority (not like the scribes). His words carried power. He demonstrated wisdom beyond human learning. His teachings were often accompanied by miracles.

Matt 7:28-29 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark 1:21-22 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark 1:27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

Luke 4:32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

John 7:15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

Not all of each sermon was recorded, but there is a wealth of information in the words Matthew Mark, Luke, and John included to give us wonderful instruction. There have been some who have promoted, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount above everything else. If you search Amazon, there are over 2000 results in a search for books on just the Sermon on the Mount. Following just the teachings of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount are inexhaustible, let alone following *everything* recorded. If we hear the message of judgment from Christ and repent, we receive salvation. Then we learn of Christ for our sanctification.

- He offered the sacrifice and *was* the sacrifice

The mediatorial role of Levi who received no inheritance in the land as a sacrifice for all Israel is reflected in

Christ who not only was a priest but the priest who *was* the sacrifice.

John 10:17,18 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

3. Aaron vs. Melchizedek -

There is one area of Christ's priesthood in which He excels above the priesthood of the Old Testament. We referred to this last week when we saw that the scepter that was given to the tribe of Judah and the priesthood was given to Aaron in the tribe of Levi. Jesus as King was born to the house of David in the tribe of Judah which makes Him ineligible to take on the role of the Levitical priesthood. But God made provision for that. In the Psalms, we have recorded that Christ would take on a different order of priesthood.

Ps 110:1-4 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3 Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

In this prophecy about Christ, we see Him reigning as King in vs. 1-3, but then He is also a priest, not in the order of Aaron, but in the order of Melchizedek. The priesthood of Melchizedek preceded

Aaron by about 500 years when Abraham rescued his nephew, Lot. Melchizedek was not only a priest, but he was also a king, specifically the king of peace.

Heb 7:1-3 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;
2 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;
3 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.

The record of Melchizedek in Genesis does not include his birth, death, or descendants which also makes him a type of Christ who is *actually* eternal.

The Melchizedek priesthood of Christ was *superior* to that of Aaron.

Heb 5:5-10 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.
6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

We call the priesthood of Aaron a type that prefigures or foreshadows Christ. The word type comes from the idea of an impression an object might make in clay. You can tell from the impression what the object is like, but the impression is *not* the object. You can make a model from the impression, but the model is not the object either. There are numerous types in the Old Testament by which we can understand Christ, but those types are insufficient where Christ is *very* sufficient for our salvation and sanctification.

- The insufficiency of the Old Testament sacrifice

Paul points out the supremacy of Christ's priesthood because the Old Testament sacrifices were insufficient.

Heb 10:1-4 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year.

4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

- The insufficiency of the Old Testament priesthood

In the Old Testament, the priests, themselves, were insufficient, not just their sacrifices. They needed sacrifices for their own sins. And, they had one huge problem: they kept dying off and had to be replaced.

Heb 9:6-7 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first

tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*.

7 But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people:

Heb 7:23-28 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

...

26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as **those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins,** and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For **the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity;** but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

- The sufficiency of Christ

The pattern of the Melchizedek priesthood was given to typify that Christ's priesthood was perfect.

Heb 7:11-27 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?

...

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another

priest,

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after **the power of an endless life.**

17 For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

...

24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

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.**

26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Also, the sacrifices offered by the Old Testament priests were insufficient. First, they had to be offered often. Jesus' sacrifice only needed to be done *once*.

Heb 9:24-28 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 **Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;**

26 **For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 **So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;** and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The sacrifice of Christ *replaced* the imperfect sacrifices of the Jewish priests.

Heb 10:8-9 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first [**the Old Testament priests and their sacrifices**], that he may establish the second [**Jesus in the New Testament and the sacrifice of Himself**].

We do not need an earthly, fleshly priest to represent, us. An earthly priest today does not have more holiness than us to get us forgiveness from God. We go to God directly to receive forgiveness.

1Tim 2:3-6 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For *there is* one God, and **one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

We do not need the merits of saint in heaven to be applied to our moral account to make us acceptable to God.

Eph 1:6-7 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

If God's grace is not big enough and perfect to redeem us, then nothing else on earth can. The best thing of all, the sacrifice of Christ was *perfect* and makes us *perfectly* saved.

Heb 10:10-14 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

This is why you do not find priests as an office in the church. Apostle, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers: yes. But our priest is Jesus, Himself, who offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice to satisfy the judgment of God that was against us.

Col 2:13-14 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

If you struggle with the realization that before God we will never be good enough, your hope of eternal life lies in the fact that Jesus *is* good enough and that by the sacrifice of Himself, your judgment has been taken care of. You can give your life to Christ and receive Him in your heart of hearts to perfectly save you forever. You can be joined to

God in your spirit, in the purpose of your life, and in your work.

If you are saved and struggling in your trials and temptations, you can come to Christ for forgiveness and restoration. If you are laboring under the clamor of a difficult relationship, you can set all that aside and begin anew as Christ sets all things right. You can set your focus on the joys of serving even in the midst of trials to a higher purpose. Also, our weaknesses that doth so easily beset us can be cast aside to patiently run the race that is set before us,

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Heb 4:15-16 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.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

It is all because of Christ that we not only come before the throne of God in heaven. We can *boldly* appear there. The question is, do we take *any* time to appear there?

1. The mediatorial work of the priests - Lev 10:11, Deu 33:10, Ezra 7:10, Neh 8:1-8, Lev 16:29-34, Num 18:15-17, 3:5-13
2. Jesus as a priest - Matt 7:28-29, Mark 1:21-22, 1:27, Luke 4:32, John 7:15, 10:17,18
3. Aaron vs. Melchizedek - Ps 110:1-4, Heb 7:1-3, 5:5-10, 10:1-4, 9:6-7, 7:23-28, 7:11-27, 9:24-28, 10:8-9, 1Tim 2:3-6, Eph 1:6-7, Heb 10:10-14, Col 2:13-14, Heb 12:2, 4:15-16, 4:15-16