

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel - Jesus the Priest

You can't entirely find fault with what the world has done with Christmas. Whenever you have something big happen, by virtue of its *being* big, by virtue of what *made* it big, it is going to command the attention of people. It is not going to be big without being big in the hearts of people. That can be said for the good or the bad: Easter, Halloween, political elections, riots and rallies. One of the problems with anything big is keeping the original message. Without being educated on the message, people begin to read into it their own views and misunderstandings. And so I can't fault people for latching on to the wonder of Emmanuel, God condescending to become man... even though that means they attach to it whatever *they* think is wonderful.

We set up the framework for understanding the entrance of God physically in the world by explaining that there were three functional roles in Israel to provide a system for the careful, holy, and effective direction of God's people. We have looked at the role of the prophets who were given to warn and caution the people to be careful in their ways before God. Next week we are going to look at the executive role of the king who led the people of God to be effective in the world. In this sermon, we are going to look at the role of the priesthood which brings people into a holy relationship with God.

1. The desire for a priest.

We need someone to bring us into a right relationship with God.

James 2:10-11 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

11For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

Jer 17:9-10 The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

10I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

Ps 14:1-3 The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good.

2The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.

3They are all gone aside, they are

all together become filthy: *there* is none that doeth good, no, not one.

What is truly amazing is how self-deceiving people are. In doing so they have become fools. Some people in their boldness against God celebrate their sin as normal and even positive. Many people try to simply avoid thinking about their sin. Others are so impressed with how good they are. All these demonstrate their rebellion by rejecting the prophets of God, whether they are the prophets of old, preachers, friends, as well as the admonitions of strangers.

1John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

When I share the Gospel, there are a number of key steps. The first one is the problem of overcoming someone's insensitivity to their sinfulness. Most of the time they will intellectually recognize their sin or even their sin nature...but they do so without *genuinely* understanding their need to get saved! We need to pray that God will give conviction to people.

2. The promise of a priest.

Anticipating the coming of Christ into the world, God had promised a priest to bring people to God. Before the Levitical priesthood of the Law was given, God had prepared another priesthood. Abraham is called the father of faith in the book of Romans, but that is a reference to the first definition of faith when he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Faith existed in the world throughout all time with right knowledge of God. When Abraham went off to recover his nephew Lot, on his return he met up with Melchizedek, the priest of God from Salem. Melchizedek was a priest already before Abraham.

Gen 14:18-20 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God.

19And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

His name literally means king (melek) of righteousness (tsedec), king of peace (shalem). When he met with Abraham he offered him communion and then Abraham gave tithes to God (there are some who erroneously think that tithing was done away with because they think it was instituted by the Law but we are now under grace). By presenting

Melchizedek to Abraham, even before the Levitical priesthood was established, God was letting the people know that there was going to be a priest to come. Later, in the Psalms, God made an explicit promise of that priest anticipating any Jewish objection to Jesus as priest since He was not from the tribe of Levi.

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

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

3Thy 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.

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

Just as God had promised through Moses a prophet that would come, God had promised through David a priest that would come. This is a direct promise. The Levitical priesthood was also a type of Jesus Christ and served as an *indirect* promise of God to provide a priest.

I hope that we might remember from the sermons on the book of Numbers how that the tribe of Levi as the priestly tribe was an actual sacrifice to God that sanctified Israel and made them holy. Because of the disqualifications of his older brothers, Levi became the firstfruits devoted to God as redemption for the rest of Israel.

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.

7And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.

8And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

9And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they *are* wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.

10And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

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;

13Because 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.

God required that the firstborn of animal or man was to be sacrificed to God. Since human sacrifice was forbidden, God provided that an animal be sacrificed to redeem the firstborn child. The reason this distinction is so important is because most people understand that priests *offer* sacrifices, but the Levites *were* a sacrifice. All the firstborn of Israel, according to vs. 13, were spared in the passover because they were redeemed by the sacrifice of the tribe of Levi. Levi would have no inheritance because as a tribe they were the redemption for all the other tribes. This is why they might have offered sin sacrifices throughout the year for the people, but once a year at the day of atonement the high priest made a sacrifice for *himself* before representing the people.

3. Jesus is the priest.

All of this was a picture of how Jesus was not only going to be the high priest for us

Heb 2:17-18 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Jesus was not only going to be the high priest for us, but just as Levi was priest and sacrifice, Jesus was going to be the actual sacrifice that He would make of Himself.

Heb 10:1-7 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.

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

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

4For *it is* not possible that the

blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Heb 10:11-14 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

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

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

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

In his book *Written in Blood*, Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

“Would you give your blood to Mary?” the doctor asked.

Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, “Sure, for my sister.”

Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room—Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned.

As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny’s smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube. With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence. “Doctor, when do I die?”

Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he’d agreed to donate his blood. He’d thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. In that brief moment, he’d made his great decision.

Johnny, fortunately, didn’t have to die to save his sister. Each of us, however, has a condition more serious than Mary’s, and it required Jesus to give not just His blood but His

life.

— Thomas Lindberg

Martin Luther wrote: “All the prophets did foresee in Spirit that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, blasphemer, etc., that ever was or could be in all the world. For he, being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world is not now an innocent person and without sins...but a sinner.” He was, of course, talking about the imputing of our wrongdoing to Christ as our substitute.

Luther continues: “Our most merciful Father...sent his only Son into the world and laid upon him...the sins of all men saying: Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and briefly be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men; see therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them. Here now comes the law and saith: I find him a sinner...therefore let him die upon the cross. And so he setteth upon him and killeth him. By this means the whole world is purged and cleansed from all sins.”

The presentation of the death of Christ as the substitute exhibits the love of the cross more richly, fully, gloriously, and glowingly than any other account of it. Luther saw this and gloried in it. He once wrote to a friend: “Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to sing to him, and say, ‘Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given me what is yours. You became what you were not, so that I might become what I was not.’”

What a great and wonderful exchange! Was there ever such love?

— Your Father Loves You by James Packer, (Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986)

When we sing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, we think of the anticipation of the Jews of the centuries of the work of the priest and the promise of an ultimate priest that weighed on their hearts. Our sin and our weakness should make remembrance of Jesus coming into the world sharper and make us more excited as He came to bring us to God.

Heb 9:11-14 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;

12Neither 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*.

13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

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:

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

26For 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.

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

28So 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.

A homeowners association took issue with a cross as part of the Christmas decorations for one of the members. They wrote:

The Board believes that the Bible is very clear on the distinction between these two major events in Christ's life on earth. The cross is appropriate for display during the Easter season, but not as a decoration during the Christmas season. Unless biblical references can be provided noting the cross as a symbol of the Christmas season for the board to reconsider, the cross is not considered to be a Christmas decoration.

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[dailycaller.com/2020/12/11/homowners-association-raleigh-north-carolina-christmas-cross-faison-family/](https://www.dailycaller.com/2020/12/11/homowners-association-raleigh-north-carolina-christmas-cross-faison-family/)

The member provided Isa 9:6-7 to show that Jesus was to be born as king who brought peace.

Isa 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be

called Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God, The everlasting
Father, The Prince of Peace.

7Of the increase of *his*
government and peace *there shall*
be no end, upon the throne of
David, and upon his kingdom, to
order it, and to establish it with
judgment and with justice from
henceforth even for ever. The
zeal of the LORD of hosts will
perform this.

He included John 18:37 to show that,
out of Jesus own mouth, that as king, He
was born to the cross.

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said
unto him, Art thou a king then?
Jesus answered, Thou sayest that
I am a king. To this end was I
born, and for this cause came I
into the world, that I should bear
witness unto the truth. Every one
that is of the truth heareth my
voice.

Finally, he added Phil 2:5-8 to show
that Jesus came into the world to go to
the cross.

Phil 2:5-8 Let this mind be in
you, which was also in Christ
Jesus:

6Who, being in the form of God,
thought it not robbery to be equal
with God:

7But made himself of no
reputation, and took upon him
the form of a servant, and was
made in the likeness of men:

8And being found in fashion as a
man, he humbled himself, and
became obedient unto death,
even the death of the cross.

The cross stayed.

True Christians recognize the deep
meaning of the Christmas art that
portrays a manger in the shadow of a
cross. The world needs to see the same
thing.

1. The desire for a priest. James
2:10-11, Ps 14:1-3 , Jer 17:9-10,
1John 1:8
2. The promise of a priest. Gen 14:18-
20, Ps 110:1-4, Num 3:5-13
3. Jesus is the priest. Heb 2:17-18, Heb
10:1-7, Heb 10:11-14, Heb 9:11-14,
Heb 9:24-28, Isa 9:6-7, John 18:37,
Phil 2:5-8